

Our Mercy

ALUMNI MAGAZINE



EDITION 1

FEBRUARY 2019

Our Mercy Alumni Magazine

A YEAR OF FIRSTS

The founding elements: a lifetime of building blocks in the making

‘Our Mercy spirit lives on through the generations.’ – Alumni President Ms Diane Psaila

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We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Wurundjeri people, and pay our respects to the elders both past and present for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of Aboriginal Australia.

From the Principal



When I arrived half way through 2017 I was deeply touched and moved by the welcome that Mercy College Coburg gave me as its incoming Principal. The way I was welcomed quickly gave me a sense that I belong to this community.

I have been excited to see the energy and passion our girls have for their learning. At Mercy, a real focus is placed not only on what is being taught but also on the manner it is taught.

I am mindful that there are many shoulders upon which I stand as I continue the work of education in the Mercy tradition. Now when I say 'I am Mercy' I am saying that I want, and will work for, the absolute best for every girl, parent/guardian and staff member who also says 'I am Mercy.' I truly believe, if we work together, we can achieve greatness and make a positive difference to every member of our community - past and present.

Whilst I was exploring the direction for the future it was important for me to understand the past stories of how we came to be who we are.

The Mercy tradition and history are evident in the nature and culture of the College. These traditions are in evidence in the efforts of the students and their parent/guardians to do their best. The example of the Sisters and the links that past students feel to the College are an expression of this tradition, and in these traditions and links, I can see the vision of Catherine McAuley.

A past student, Diane Psaila wrote to the College about one evening in May 2014 when she was at the theatre foyer for "39 Steps". From this letter, a significant reconnection emerged, arising from her interest in and commitment to her old school. I was aware of the need to establish an Alumni Association and it made sense to appoint her as our inaugural Alumni President. This is a position she has been honoured to take on and feels privileged to have established Alumni networks. Her energy and commitment have been phenomenal.

It gives me great pleasure to have our first edition of our Alumni magazine, which is filled with stories as we remember our past, celebrate the present and look to the future.

Let us never lose trust in the patience and mercy of God.

MS LILA MCINERNEY

Principal



From the Alumni President



Life is full of surprises and one special encounter in 2014 was the beginning of a new chapter in my journey. An old school friend recognised me in a crowd at a theatre foyer.. From there I connected with many other school friends. It has been decades since leaving the College gates but there we were, through laughter and tears, falling into easy conversation, reminiscing about the old days and catching up on the stories of where life had taken us since then.

Our Mercy magazine captures a timeline. The essence of the road back to Mercy, of bridging the gap, when on the 14th of August 2017 prompted by my father, I sent a tribute of my peer year 1976, (Yr10 in those days) to the Principal. It was the beginning of a rewarding and significant relationship in working towards connecting Mercy Alumni. To spread the goodwill, to encourage attendance to our annual October reunion and to invite Alumni to share stories of their journeys of life after College. The reflections tell of ambitions, of challenges, of successes and they offer words of inspiration for all of us in the community; past, present and future.

I pay tribute to our foundress, Catherine McAuley who put it so well..

‘Hurra for foundations, it makes the old young and the young merry..’

– Catherine McAuley Jan 4, 1841

There is nothing like maintaining or rekindling old school friendships. Mercy College; the foundation of our secondary education and the beginnings of lifelong friendships. Let's build on opportunities to expand our network!

MS DIANE PSAILA

Alumni President



Connecting the dots **TRIBUTE SENT TO PRINCIPAL, 14TH AUGUST 2017**

The 39 Steps

Mercy College 1976

Geoghegan College 1978

Next year will be our 40yrs anniversary since we left behind our secondary school classrooms to start our journeys as adults to continue on with study, pave career paths in the workforce, travel, family life and so on.

This year we came together once again, at the Old England, third year running, forming a tradition to celebrate our Christmas in July reunion marking 39yrs; 39 steps measured in years.

We had our small groups maintaining close friendships over the years; however, it was this one evening in May 2014 at the theatre foyer at Parade College that a significant reconnection emerged.

The yr12 students were performing the drama play, 'The 39 Steps.'

I heard someone calling my name as I waited in the foyer for the theatre doors to open. 'Diane, Diane Psaila!'

It was Loretta D'Elia there attending the play to see her nephew, Steven, perform.

At first, I was puzzled. Then recognition. The years just peeled away. There she was just as I remembered her all those years ago, full of abundant energy, warmth and joy to see me.



We hugged and hugged and it was just as if we picked up where we left off.

We arranged to meet quite a few times sharing our stories of where life had taken us since leaving the College gates.

Friends informed me of a Facebook page that was started up for our peer year. It has been growing steadily in numbers and has been good in supporting each other in sharing news and when someone new joins, the class photos pop up again!

It was so good to meet the girls at various venues organised by one or another over the last three years. Some of them haven't changed at all! Out would come class photos and consequent laughter on how daggy our hairstyles looked and of course the recount of stories of how strict the nuns were, who had which teacher for what and how we hated the cross country run on hot days and darling Mrs Johns; the shorthand and typing teacher who was forever the prim and proper with the constant, 'posture, posture, feet flat on the floor and back straight girls!' while we typed away!

We had an earlier meetup this year at the Old Cop Shop in Coburg organised by Anna Parente who lives and works in Zurich to coincide with her visit to Australia! It is such a good feeling to reconnect with old souls sharing our accomplishments, joys and hardships over the years and to sadly learn that a few have left this earth.

I thought it appropriate to start a tradition, using the tradition of Christmas, albeit in July, to connect with the girls as a yearly event.

This Christmas in July at the Old England there was a marked difference; no one had brought any school photographs. The conversation was about us and now. Proudly; We are Mercy Women of Substance; older and wiser.



Alumni Reunion 29 OCTOBER 2017

Familiar sights mingled with new impressions.

What a wonderful afternoon it was at our Mercy College reunion today at the College... Joy, Elsa & Rosie were there from my year. Lila McInerney, Mercy College Principal, formally introduced the event in the Community Hub. A significant beginning on common ground to focus on making future reunions a greater celebration of connected growth in sharing time and stories. Conversations flowed almost as if we had never been apart and supported by the wisdom of genuine kindness and patience to listen to each other.

Looking through the albums of class photographs, recognising this person and that one, was fun as well as an escorted tour of the College.



The College has had lots of refurbishment and additions since our time there but those corridor tiles were the same and immediately brought back memories of those anxious moments of tip toeing when I was late for class so no one would hear me!

Current students have a wonderful learning environment. Every possible support, opportunity and comfort to help them along their academic and personal journey.

We all received a tea cup and saucer, souvenir spoon and bookmark wrapped in cellophane; a significant value of hospitality in maintaining the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy. Afternoon tea was beautifully set up with cups of tea on offer, a tradition Catherine McAuley would be proud to see repeated again and again of her memorable last words;

'When I'm gone will you tell the sisters to get a good cup of tea to comfort one another.'

1841 Letter of Mary Vincent Whitty to Cecilia Marmion in Sullivan, Catherine McAuley and the Tradition of Mercy, p. 243



Documenting Progress

Making it Official and Structured - First Alumni Meeting - November 9th 2017

Networking Progress Through Proactive Discussions

Let's move forward by using existing channels to maximise exposure

Let's implement initiatives to encourage Alumni contact varying the reporting style to attract interest

Let's reach out – promoting our Mercy values – Compassion, Justice, Hospitality, Excellence –

We are a relative and all inclusive community, encouraging Mercy generations to be the best they can be.

STAYING CONNECTED—ALUMNI NEWS!

Let's implement a new and exciting approach! Our very own – “Where are they now?” What a pleasure it has been, in recent years, reconnecting with many of my old school friends. Many a fascinating story of life paths, the people we met along the way, families, friends, careers, cultures, travel etc. etc. I thought, ‘Wouldn't it be great to capture a little of that essence in the form of an interview?’

Below is an extract of one such story. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did putting it together... I aim to approach other peer years; tailoring the interview questionnaire to suit!

Stay tuned for more!

Introducing: Anne Whalley Class of 1976 Yr10

Anne, do you remember what it was like at College and when you left?

‘The first day at Mercy College I was assigned a seat down the back of the classroom next to Carmel Corsetti who I still see at our class reunions.

I remember there was lots of learning and homework. English, Maths, Sewing & Religion were the subjects that appealed to me and are the subjects that have shaped my life.

When I finished year 12 it was time to find a job ... any job! I really had no idea what I wanted to do so I joined a bank and got trained on the job. This job enabled me to buy a property and I married my boss. You really know who a person is when you work with them every day. My values were based on what I learnt at Mercy College. I wasn't perfect but I still tried to improve my attitude and be the best I could be’.

Anne, did you set out with a career path?

‘I studied part time—Melbourne College of Textiles & Fashion Design, IT, Adult Training & Assessment, Business & Administration Management, Public Speaking, Business planning and marketing, Image Consultant & Colour Analysis training.

My working life started in the bank, a Ground Hostess with Ansett International, teaching Religious Education, teaching IT, Receptionist, Bequest officer for CBM, Retail sales in Fabric, Manager of Administration and finally launching my own business full time helping people dress to express themselves!

I am an International Sewing Mentor & Motivational Speaker, run Sewing Workshops and one on one sessions deciphering Style Ingredients. I travel around the world speaking at Sewing Expos and will be speaking at the Melbourne Stitches and Craft Show at the Royal Exhibition Buildings this month. I love sharing what outfits I make on Instagram and YouTube. I write a blog on sewing, fabric and life’.

Thanks for sharing Anne!



Remembering and Acknowledging

SR PHILOMENA LILIARD RSM — THIRD PRINCIPAL OF MERCY COLLEGE



It is with gratitude that current Mercy staff, Mercy students, Mercy parents, guardians, and our Mercy community in general, look to those Mercy Sisters who were instrumental in forming the faith-based community we are today. We are all beneficiaries of an incredible legacy. A significant individual in the Mercy story is Sr Philomena Liliard RSM, (Mercy College's third Principal (1972-1974). In her 91st year and 64th year of religious profession, Sr Philomena died peacefully on Monday 16 October 2017 at Rice Village, Geelong. The role Sr Philomena played in building our College deserves our recognition and praise. Having looked back over her life achievements, it is with certainty that we can say that if Sr Philomena was a teacher at Mercy today, she would undoubtedly enrich the College with her story- she would gently expose those parts of our society that are often hidden; making the 'invisible, visible' just as Catherine McAuley did. Sr Philomena's life story teaches us all that we can make a difference- no matter what the era, no matter what role you have.

There are 8000 Sisters of Mercy worldwide and 250,000 partners in ministry; an incredible network spread over 47 countries. As staff at Mercy College Coburg, we are very proud to be a part of that alliance. We are all shapers of the dream of education and justice for all; we pay allegiance to Sr Philomena who inspires us to chase the dream.

Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her.

MS LILA MCINERNEY

Principal

Night of Excellence 30th November 2017

Thrilled to have received an invitation from the Principal to the Night of Excellence awards which took place on the 30th November, I drove into the College car park and immediately knew I didn't have to contemplate where to park!

I spoke to students, their families and staff who greeted me warmly. The event was beautifully organised by a team of people, headed by the Principal, dedicated to ensure an experience of welcome, perfection and applaud for all the students, speakers, guests and of course staff who are an integral part of a student's personal and academic growth.

We were treated to refreshments; hospitality in abundance and 'a good cup of tea!'

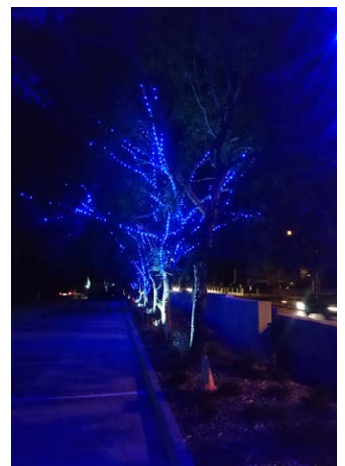
The arts' display is testimony to the creative talents of the students. I was delighted to get into an in depth discussion with one of the artists, Vikaye Sithole. Perception is unique to the individual and offers dimension when shared to the thinking process. An impressive encounter!

Vikaye demonstrated wisdom beyond her years!

When returning to my car I couldn't resist taking a photograph of the trees that were lit up in blue fairy lights.

Befitting, I thought, as I drove off remembering Principal Lila McInerney's words of the theme for this year in honour of Catherine McAuley,

'Shine the light of Mercy.'



QUOTATION FROM THE WRITINGS OF CATHERINE MCAULEY

'I would like to tell you all the little cheering things that God permits to fall in our way.' – Letter to de Pazzi Delaney
Oct 3, 1837

Dear Mercy College Community,
Happy New Year 2018!

It was a wonderful time to relax and enjoy the festive season with family and friends.
Best of wishes to our year 12 students of 2017 as they go forward on their life journeys.
A big welcome to the new students and families to our Mercy College community!

From College Gates to Interview

ANTOINETTE PELLEGRINI CLASS OF 1976 (YR 10)

Catherine McAuley, the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, put it so well, *'I would like to tell you all the little cheering things that God has permitted to fall in our way.'*

Perfect quotation to insert, I think, having met up with one of my old school friends, Antoinette Pellegrini, last week to interview and fill in a, *'Where are they now?'* questionnaire for the Mercy College Alumni insert of the fortnightly newsletter.

We hadn't seen each other since leaving school! A long, long time! We attended the same primary school too! St Matthew's North Fawkner! Such emotion and joy as we embraced! Old souls reconnecting; sharing stories of our journeys and aspirations for the future.

Antoinette, describe your time at Mercy College and your career path.

'I remember being excited and nervous on my first day at Mercy College. I wasn't sure what to expect but I had my friends from primary school with me, Julie Lukic, Lucy and Mary Pawlus, making the experience a little easier.

The thing I remember most about Mercy College was the friendship and inclusiveness I felt amongst the other girls. I always felt I belonged.

I loved the academic subjects, but struggled with sport. That hasn't changed! What I learnt from being at Mercy College was to always try your best, not to please anyone else but for your own sense of accomplishment.

I have learnt throughout my career that it is always good to plan and have goals, but to also allow yourself to be open to new possibilities and experiences. Most important of all, you should never stop following your dreams and passions.

From when I was quite young I had always wanted to be a teacher and it was during my time at Mercy College that I decided I would be a Secondary School teacher. After Year 12, I went to the University of Melbourne where I completed a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma in Education. I started my teaching career as an English, History and Humanities teacher at Erinbank High School. It was the same year I got married – a year of significant change for me.

Three years into my teaching, an opportunity came up to work in the Victorian Public Service. It wasn't what I had planned but it started a career of nearly 30 years, the last 11 of which I spent as Manager of Business and Executive Services in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, supporting the Victorian Premier and Cabinet Ministers. I learnt a great deal about public administration, management and corporate services.

Although I had a great career working for Government, I always felt that I wanted to do something more. I had a passion for writing and for helping people in a more holistic way. At the end of 2016, at the age of 56, I left the Victorian Public Service to finally pursue my passion.

In 2017, I started my own business called The Thought Connection and published my Book, *Your Thoughts Matter: The future You Are Creating Starts Now*, and an accompanying Reflection Journal and Affirmation Cards. I even took all of the photographs for the book and the cards, which meant learning a little about photography.

Age is not a barrier to make your passions a reality!



My Lifelong Friends Started Here

JOSEPHINE TYRELL CLASS OF 1998

Josephine's peer year celebrated their 20 years since leaving College!

Josephine made contact with Mercy College to update her contact details and I took the opportunity to make the approach for an interview.

Josephine, tell us of your impressions of Mercy College and where you went from there.

'Mercy is a great place which holds lots of wonderful memories for me.

I would listen, enthralled, to Mrs Jeffrey teach Egyptian history. I'd get my fingers dusty cooking scones in Home Economics. Mr Joy enthusiastically taught us about recessive and dominant genes in Biology and Mrs Wickremasinghe opened our minds to the world around us in Geography.

What stays with me the most is how I have made lifelong friends. They were with me through the school years, through University and now, in my adult life, we still catch up, still support each other.

I remember, toward the end, being full of hope for the future, that bubbling sensation of excitement of what was yet to be.

My plan started with getting into University to study!

My first preference was the University of Melbourne, which I achieved, where I studied Arts.

Inspired by the brilliant Mrs Jeffrey - so many wonderful memories of her classes! - I majored in History and Italian, and furthered my degree with Honours in Italian.

Stepping out from the academic world and into the corporate, I worked in legal firms as a personal assistant and legal secretary. Seeking more challenge, I entered into the public service with the DHS.

From there I moved to the ATO to broaden my horizons. I have had many roles throughout my path, from case manager, site coordinator and events planner, to executive assistant to recruitment officer. Currently I am a recruitment officer in Talent Acquisition.

This demonstrates the beauty of humanities degrees: they open you up to a world of possibilities, where anything is achievable if you have the courage to give it a go!

So many times I have said yes to a new role, leaving a comfortable role I know well. Each time it is daunting. Each time I accepted the risks. Each time I made it work. The experience and knowledge I have gained from each role has been priceless.

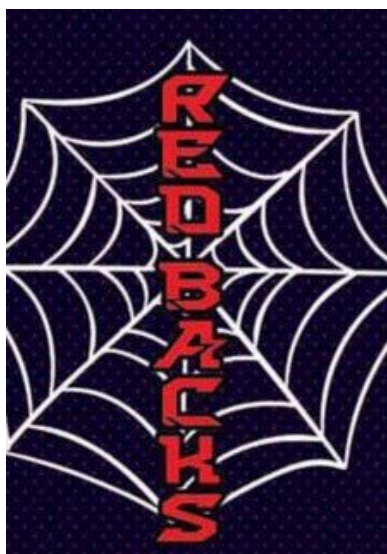
That attitude has brought me to where I find myself today, and it is an attitude that was instilled into me from back in my school days'



The adage 'never too old to learn,' is a great comfort to me. Quotation from the writings of Catherine McAuley, letter to Frances Warde September 27, 1839

From one President to another

CARMELA (MELINA) TRIULCIO CLASS OF 1977



'My Softball Club dream, passion and vision...is to see the softball diamonds filled with Red Backs uniforms as far as the eye can see!

I now have one of my old Mercy College mates playing softball in the very club I founded...

How special is that?' Carmela Triulcio – class of 1977, (Melina to her family and friends), President of the West Coburg Softball Club, Red Backs.

I had the pleasure of meeting Melina at the Mercy College Alumni reunion last October. Melina's business card was passed onto me and here we are; another shared success story of determination in making goals a reality.

To think her first softball game at Mercy College was the start of an ambition to form a softball team and club.

Melina, Mercy College holds a significant memory for you?

'Oh!! I remember it, like it was yesterday, my first year at High School, I was so worried. As every child would be...being the only one from your primary school going elsewhere. But at the same time, I was so excited to be starting a new chapter in my life.

My favourite sport was softball. I remember we were playing a final at the school. Back then there was no grass or smooth surfaces, nothing but gravel. But that never stopped me from sliding home!! Recalling my elbow, grazed, bleeding and I was in so much pain. As if I was going to tell anyone, I just wanted to play on...and I did...later that night, my parents took me to hospital...there was no damage, all I needed was pain killers. I know this might sound childish, but I still have that scar on my elbow and yes you guessed, it does come up in a conversation every now and then!

I took away with me some wonderful memories that will live in my heart forever. I really miss Mercy Collage, it went too fast!! '

'In 2010 it all happened. West Coburg (Red Backs) Softball Club was born. I was the proud founder and President of my club. It was one of my proudest moments. Today the club is proudly part of the West Coburg Sports Club. Where you can play Cricket, Footy, Little Aths, Netball and Softball!!! '



International Women's Day 8 MARCH 2018

Do not fear offending anyone. Speak as your mind directs and always act with more courage when the "mammon of unrighteousness" is in question. – Quotation from the writings of Catherine McAuley, Letter to Mary Ann Doyle July 24, 1841

'The Power to Empower – Women in Leadership,' Principal Lila McInerney wrote in her message to the community in the last newsletter, the focus for this year's International Women's Day is a day to commemorate the significant contributions of women all over the world, in any capacity; big and small.

A day to embrace united empowerment, to step forward in equality and push at limitations to experience that freedom of choice to achieve the right of fulfilment.

A mindset of awareness: Challenges are only barriers to heighten the determination to succeed.

When I came across Catherine McAuley's quote above, I immediately thought about the hardships and challenges she would have faced as a woman to form the foundations of the Sisters of Mercy to provide shelter and education for women and girls.

As a school for girls, we can attribute her determination and teachings as a significant motivation to where we are now and we rely on Women in Leadership to set an example, to pave the way, to inspire by their success; cementing a belief that anything is achievable.

In keeping with this theme of International Women's Day, I am proud to introduce, *Anna Parente class of 1976 (Yr10)*, who has been living and working at International Schools in picturesque Zurich for the last fifteen years and our new interview initiative, **'Greetings from...'**

ANNA PARENTE CLASS OF 1976 (YR 10)

Greetings from Zurich, Switzerland...

Hoi Diane,

As I write this I am on my one week ski break! Favourite time of year for the children I teach! The snow fall this winter has created an amazing ski season! A long, cold winter here with close to zero temperatures during the daytime! As I watch the winter Olympics I can imagine what the negative temperatures feel like, having experienced them at some of Switzerland's famous mountains like Zermatt, The Matterhorn and Titlis.

Meeting my Swiss husband in Melbourne and moving to Zurich, Switzerland is something I would not have imagined when I finished my schooling at Mercy College and then went on to graduate as a Primary School Teacher.

I had worked in Melbourne as a Catholic Primary School Teacher for about twenty years. Resigning from my job in Melbourne was a big step. I had to be open minded as I was going to work

in another country I didn't know much about and it was a big risk without first securing a teaching job...

Students are the same wherever you teach. They have the same basic needs, to learn and be valued as a learner. If there is a difference it is that in one class there are many different nationalities to teach, some with English and some with no English or limited English. What these children all have in common is that both parents or one parent has accepted a job in Zurich and so they have moved here either from their own country (their first move) or another country, some parents move many times to different countries with their work. ...

I miss Melbourne, especially my family and friends and I am looking forward to the day when I can spend more time with all of them.

Tchuss, Addio, Au revoir, Bun ans vair!



Foundation Students meet with Alumni President

DIANA HEIM CLASS OF 1969 (YR 11)

The Symbolism of Pride of Place – The First Years

What an honour it was to meet in April with a couple of lovely ladies; our foundation students of 1965 after receiving an email of introduction last year from Diana!

'We set the tone' – Diana Heim Class of 1969 (Yr11)

Hi Diane,

Congratulations on your appointment as Alumni President, I wish you well in your role.

My name is Diana Heim (nee Guminski) and I am one of the Foundation students of the college. I started in 1965 and at that time my class was based at St Ambroses's in Brunswick while the other two Year 7 classes were at St Paul's in Coburg. This was a temporary measure until the college building was completed in 1966.

We are a large group of Foundation students who try to meet once a year. We were well represented at the college's Jubilee celebrations at the Cathedral two years ago. We also canvassed Michelle Cotter to have an award named after the college's first school captain, Faye O'Leary, who sadly passed away 5 years ago and we were delighted when she agreed to this request.

If I am not mistaken the Alumni will meet on the third Sunday of October? I will mark this date on my calendar and will spread the word.

With best regards,

Diana Heim



Maree Salm (nee Helliar) - left and Diana Heim (nee Guminski) - right

I was intrigued and wanted to know more. What was it like to be a student back then? The challenges for students moving from a primary to a secondary school that was finding its feet in forming an institution? Not only the bricks and mortar in creating learning spaces but in establishing for girls an education based on Mercy values - Excellence, Hospitality, Justice and Compassion?

I asked that we meet in person and so a lunch date at the Old Cop Shop in Coburg was organised. We immediately fell into easy conversation. Diana and Maree recounted many stories of College days painting a detailed picture in my mind that I felt I was there with them! Their recollection was outstanding, animated and bouncing from one to the other; it was as if they had just left the College. It was a joy to watch and listen to them and the laughter was good for the soul! An invaluable insight of the birth of the College from the student's perspective.



A reflection on Mothers Day 2018

Motherhood
Boundless in its love
From the womb it is born
Scent of purity and innocence
Innate wisdom of knowing and trust
Hand in hand
A journey of joy and growth
Emotion and pride
Nurturing encouragement
Through awkward maturity
Foothold that is sometimes unsure
Testing endurance
An emerging individual
Set on a journey
Making an imprint like footprints in
the sand
Although, fondly glancing back
There it is
An unconditional love that is
boundless...

DIANE PSAILA May 2018



Principal Lila McNerney extended an invitation to the Alumni President to attend Mother (other female role models) and daughter morning tea in Celebration of Mothers Day. 'I can be there in spirit!' I said to Lila and so I wrote reflections. It was a surprise to learn that the reflections were printed on a decorative card and presented to the Mothers along with a long stem rose!



Becoming a mother is by far the greatest gift of my life.

The moment I set eyes on each of my three children the pride and love I felt is a memory that is imprinted on my mind forever.

My precious little beings...

The beginnings of a timeless bond.

My blessed mother.

As the years pass, I look more fondly at you and treasure each moment we spend together.

The stories of your youth, the wisdom of your words and selfless devotion to our family.

A kindred spirit.

I know mum.

I am because of you.

A bond forever

My mother

I love you

Strong and Determined but tolerant and compassionate..

DANIELLA PAIDI CLASS OF 2007



Daniella had contacted the College to request advertising space for her new law practice in Craigieburn.

In Daniella's words, 'Mercy was like my home and my friends and teachers were like my family. I always felt supported and encouraged and this gave me the confidence to believe in myself and pursue my dreams. I loved our library and gym. Our canteen food was pretty good but the cake stalls at lunchtime were even better! The giant Freddo Frogs sold for \$1! Well, you can't get those anymore! Also, how could I forget the socials with St Jo's? Yes, they were fun too!

But, if I fast-forward a decade and really think about why I liked Mercy, it was because I felt like I was valued and belonged there.

I did always want to go to university after high school so that I could pursue a professional career..

After I graduated from Mercy, I attended university, obtained my qualifications and entered the workforce. I was admitted as a lawyer in 2014, and since then have enjoyed a wonderful legal career, practicing property law in private, inner-city firms, government organisations and establishing my own law firm, Highlands Lawyers.'



Sometimes it takes a little longer to find your way..

NANCY DI GRANDE CLASS OF 2007



Nancy had contacted the College to talk about the possibility of meeting with students...

A great majority of Mercy College students have a career plan by the time they hit their final years. What if you don't? That uncertainty can exhibit insecurities in many forms and lead to settling for a path that is unfulfilling.

In Nancy's words:

My biggest fear was leaving school as I didn't really know what I wanted to do. Everyone else seemed to have a pathway sorted except for me.

What I took away from Mercy was to always work hard and stay positive.

There's always a way and you will eventually work out what you want to do.

When I finished all I knew was that I had a love for sport. So I decided I'd start there. I started with a Diploma of sport and recreation and completed that, which was 2 years. I then went on to begin studying a double degree in Exercise Science and Psychology. I did however only complete first year. After that I took a year off did a bit of musical theatre training before finding Paramedics. Whilst studying I worked a variety of jobs from coaching kids, swim teaching, working as a head trainer at a VFL football club to lifeguarding.

My biggest milestone by far was moving to QLD. That's when life finally started to fall into place. Living in my dream location (The sunshine coast), working my dream job (Paramedic) even meeting the man of my dreams.



A surprising twist of luck

Hard work, determination and courage.. The fundamental essentials in achieving goals... But sometimes, all that and a little luck just at the right time can take life on a remarkable journey..’ – Diane Psaila June 2018

ALANNA MITCHELL CLASS OF 2013 WAS THE GUEST SPEAKER AT THE NIGHT OF EXCELLENCE 2017

Alanna has experienced a wealth of knowledge in the world of fashion and design, studying at the Australian Academy of Design where she gained recognition for her excellence in creative flair and visual literacy.

However, Alanna wanted more.

To make her dream of studying and working overseas a reality. An information session, a successful portfolio submission and phone interview landed her overseas studying at the prestigious Paris College of Art and before too long, engrossed in the glamour and competitive thicket of renowned fashion houses ...

‘Aside from Paris, I was also lucky enough to intern with Harper’s Bazaar Magazine in Sydney!

Upon returning home to complete my final year at the Australian Academy of Design, I was confused as to what exactly I wanted to do once I finished my degree. I had a class that was all about job hunting, where we needed to source job descriptions and prepare mock cover letters and resumes that would one day help us secure our dream job.

I came across an advertisement for a Wardrobe Coordinator Intern position with Harper’s Bazaar Magazine in Sydney. The internship was for 3 months with an immediate start. Three months went by and I had no reply.

I was on my way to my Graduate Showcase in November when I just so happened to check my emails. Aubree Smith, the Intern Coordinator had sent an email saying “Hi Alanna, Can you come in for an interview on Thursday?”

I had even forgotten I had sent this email! A few emails back and forth, I told Aubree I actually lived in Melbourne but I would love to still be considered. She offered me a month long internship for 4 days a week and suddenly my path looked more like a red carpet as I felt as though I was in a scene from the Devil Wears Prada. On my first day of the internship, I was handed over 6 Prada bags and given the directions of Prada Head Office to drop them back safely because the contents were too expensive to be delivered in the mail!

On my final day in the office I built up the courage to ask Aubree how she was so trusting of offering me an internship without even seeing a resume or cover letter, and basically knowing nothing about me.

She said, “One of the interns recommended her friend who is also called Alanna. I went into my emails and typed in her name but it ended up being your email instead.

When you said you were from Melbourne I realised I had emailed the wrong Alanna, but when you followed up to find out more about the position, you sounded too excited for me to say no.”

Yes, a little luck can go a long way! ‘

‘With a dream and goal in mind, you can hop, skip and jump your way to wherever you want to go.’



It's important to look after yourself...



MELISSA CORSETTI CLASS OF 2010

Greetings from Rishikesh, India...

My name is Melissa and I graduated from Mercy College in 2010! Wow I can't believe it's been 8 years!

After leaving college I went to study nursing at La Trobe University and have been working as a clinical nurse specialist for almost 5 years at the Royal Melbourne hospital.

I've also been enjoying travelling to Europe and I am proud to have just finished my yoga teacher training in India, the yoga capital of the world! I can add my certification as a yoga teacher to my resume!

Rishikesh is beautiful! A cultural hub; chaotic but kind place where I have learnt so much about myself. The importance of constantly showing kindness, love all living beings and to follow your heart and passion in life.

After a short visit to Italy to visit my family I'll be home in the middle of July and would love to teach the year 11 and 12 students some yoga because looking after yourself is so important to living a fulfilling and successful life; to thrive and to be your best self!

Anyway I better sign off now, I hope you all have a wonderful day and keep smiling...

School Friendships Forever – A Lifetime of Connections

WHAT ABOUT SHARING REFLECTIONS AS A GROUP?

Sisterhood – friendships entwined through life's journey likened to a treasure trove of wisdom, trust and loyalty, comfortable and free of judgement... – Diane Psaila June 2018

WHAT MAKES A FRIENDSHIP?

Over the many years since my schooling there has been one significant group of friends who have shared my life through all the ups and downs. Rejoicing in my successes and a support in my times of need.

We have known each other since primary school, through the adolescent years, secondary school, early adulthood and through to our mature years.

That is a special bond of life experiences.

The many connections I have made in recent years with Mercy College Alumni has been rewarding in the statements I often hear like the ones below which describe old school friendships:

'My old school friends keep me well grounded.'

'My old school friends are like my family.'

'We have the best laughs talking about the old school days.'

'We grew up together and still are together.'

'We listen and encourage each other to be the best we can be.'

'Even if we don't see each other in awhile, we just pick up where we left off when we do.'

School Friendships Forever Class of 1976 (Year 10)



Coming full circle

A MERCY COLLEGE STUDENT BACK THEN, A MERCY COLLEGE TEACHER NOW.

FIONA LORENTI CLASS OF 1994

Recently I met up with Principal Lila McInerney and during discussions we spoke of past Mercy students who are now staff at the College.

Fiona is an individual who, in our few communications, has shown me what a fine example she is of the Mercy College values of Excellence, Hospitality, Justice and Compassion

I have the pleasure of introducing Fiona Lorenti (nee Cuomo) class of 1994 who, for the past four years has been working as a Mercy College teacher of Math, Science and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and is current Head of Learning - Science.

'I have always had an interest in science, and this became more evident during my VCE studies. I had a range of science teachers who were passionate about what they taught. I'm sure many of you would remember Mr. Joy. He was probably my favourite teacher, although my appreciation for his knowledge only came when I had him for year 11 Biology.

Mr Joy drew the most fascinating and detailed images of organisms, whether they were from animals or plants, and you could see that he enjoyed being in his element. We still have some of his drawings on display in the laboratory.'

Mr McGlassion was another influential teacher. He was my Chemistry teacher who was also very passionate about what he taught. I guess if the teacher comes with a lot of enthusiasm, it's contagious! For me it certainly was, as these teachers, along with many others, drove me to appreciate science and all it has to offer.

Many other influential teachers that helped shape me into what I am and how I teach today are now my colleagues, and I am very happy to call them my friends. I work among these wonderful people every day and they bring that extra bit of happiness to the workplace as well.

My Family are my inspiration. I look at my daughters, and I'm watching how fast they are growing. Before long, they will be in my shoes with a family of their own. As a full time working mum, I want to show them that anything is possible if you put your mind to it.

You CAN have it all! Yes, it takes hard work and lots of effort, but who are we kidding! Life wasn't meant to be easy. You get out what you put in. If I give my 100%, then the output will measure that. I demonstrate this in my life and my work. I want this to be an example to my girls that as long as you do your best, try your hardest and enjoy what you do, great things will happen. They have for me so far, and I believe they will continue to do so.'

TWO OF FIONA'S DAUGHTERS ARE STUDENTS AT MERCY COLLEGE:

What is it like as a student having your mum working as a teacher at Mercy College?

It is truly inspiring to see my mum doing what she does best, and makes us both feel very proud to have her as our mother. Sophie and I both want to become teachers when we are older and this is all because we are inspired by our mum!

She's a true Mercy Girl!



From left: Jenni Hickey, Fiona Lorenti and Julia Pirani



A Guest Appearance..

It was so nice to meet Principal Lila McInerney and see that our old school is in the hands of a caring, passionate and energetic Principal. – Josie Annetta (nee Le Favi)

Celebrating 40yrs since leaving the College gates as students (Mercy College Class of 1976 Yr10 / Geoghegan College Class of 1978 Yr12) at the annual Christmas in July reunion at the Old England in Heidelberg.

There was a difference this year. The lunch tables were set complete with blue and yellow balloons imprinted with 'Congratulations' and a delicious continental sponge cake from Lucchini Cake Shop Preston that was topped with the message; **'School Friendships Forever – 40yrs.'**

Yes! Forty years! A proud group growing in numbers each year. The good news is spreading warmth! Kindred spirits with the common bond of values instilled in us from our very first days as Yr7 students walking through the gates of Mercy College.

We stand together united, representing school friendships over the test of time.'

'They are a part of my life; then, now, forever.'



Alumni are invited to present at Yr12 Career Expo

To all Year 12 Students: Set goals, work hard; be the best you can be for yourself .. – Diane Psaila September 2018

Vicki Harvey, Mercy College Pathways Coordinator designed a program for Alumni, in pairs, to present to Yr12 students to offer invaluable advice by sharing their personal stories – successes, failures and the courage to take steps to achieve goals.

Antoinette Pellegrini *I felt they were particularly interested in the different careers that I have had and the message that there is always the opportunity to change direction, to take up new opportunities and to do what you are passionate about..*

Anne Whalley *I found the girls respectful and an interested audience. Quite an amazing feeling to be on the other side of the desk.*

Melissa Corsetti *I hope we have inspired them to know they are in control of their full potential!!*

Alanna Mitchell *A couple of the girls came up to gain a further insight once the presentation had ended!*



Annie Driver, Sabrina Martins, Melissa Corsetti, Moreen Hana, Melina Triulico, Antoinette Pellegrini, Anne Whalley and Alanna Mitchell

Lights Camera Action! A Stage of Contrasts

ANNIE DRIVER CLASS OF 2015

WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, THE SHOW MUST GO ON!

A journey in its first steps of exploration, however a story to share in its testimony of inspiration in making the most of opportunities that come your way.

Mercy College is still a major part and influence in Annie's life. In addition to her continued tertiary studies, involvement in musicals, both on stage and behind the scenes, Annie works part time as an Education Support Officer at Mercy College nurturing her ambition to help students to achieve their best.

Annie, what musicals did you participate in when you were a student at Mercy College?

Throughout our time at Mercy, my best friend Tania Ragusa and I also worked alongside one another in the school musicals, both playing lead roles in Hairspray and All Shook Up!

What is one highlight of your College years, besides your involvement in musicals?

I was a member of the student executive team of 2015 appointed as College Co-Captain and my friend Tania as Performing Arts Captain.



Connecting the generations through the Performing Arts

ENCORE 21

A spectacular celebration of the past 21 school musicals – Parade College and its sister schools from 1996 to 2017.

Mercy College:

- 2013 Aida
- 2014 Hairspray
- 2015 All Shook Up
- 2016 How to Succeed in Business
- 2017 Catch Me If You Can

It was a pleasure to interview the girls after their top class performance! Their level of maturity and professionalism is testimony of their commitment to achieve their best in what they undoubtedly enjoy! They were humble in their expressions of gratitude, of being involved in this significant event, beaming with pride of their connection to Mercy College where they developed their craft through the guidance and dedication of their teachers.



Top row from left: Michelle Buljan (2015), Anna Quirante (2015), Kara Pegorin (2014), Rochell Ryder (2015)
Bottom row from left: Elizabeth Psaila (2013), Amanda D'Arienzo (2015), Annie Driver (2015), Julia Mancuso (2017), Krystal Suliman (current yr 11), Tania Ragusa (2015)

Elizabeth Psaila Class of 2013 Truly special.

Michelle Buljan Class of 2015 Sense of community.

Tania Ragusa Class of 2015 Reuniting like this is nice.

Annie Driver Class of 2015 Feeling proud.

Julia Mancuso Class of 2017 Brings back wonderful memories.

How rewarding it is as Alumni President to be connecting with individuals who make me feel proud of the common bond we share! Mercy College, our backbone of values that carry us in our aspirations!

After all this time, I have reconnected with Dianne Butler, class of 1976 Yr10. Dianne spoke of her decision eight years ago to move to Mombasa, Kenya. A calling to assist the local children and their families to live a better quality of life. It is the right of any individual; to have food to eat, to be educated and most of all, to be safe in their community without being compromised for the most basic of everyday necessities.

Dianne is a prime example that age is not a barrier in taking up challenges. It takes her far from the comforts of home, family and friends but she is happy in her plight in making a positive difference to the lives of underprivileged children and their families.

DIANNE BUTLER CLASS OF 1976 (YR 10)

A calling to Mombasa



Greetings from Mombasa, Kenya...

Greetings Diane, from my home, far, far away in Mombasa, Kenya!

It's been so long since we left secondary college!

Sometimes life takes you on unexpected adventures full of challenges that involve great courage and separation from all that you know!

After College I went on to work for the Government for too many years but finally when I was turning 50 I travelled to Africa and discovered my passion for working with the beautiful people of my local community here in Mombasa.

Mombasa is a beautiful coastal region of Kenya. I help out in a couple of primary schools and raise funds for their food program, teach an adult education class and run a small project called Days for Girls Mombasa, working with a group of women with disabilities to make reusable sanitary pad kits. We distribute the kits to girls in school, teaching reproductive health education.

The people here are extremely warm and welcoming despite the daily struggles they experience just to feed and educate their families.

Apart from my volunteer work I love living close to beautiful beaches and having access to National Parks with incredible wildlife. An African safari should be on everyone's bucket list!

My life here in Mombasa is where I need and want to be, but also love spending time with family and friends in Australia so I travel home as often as I can.

So good to connect!



Belief is Powerful **FIRST YEAR OUT**

CLASS OF 2017 STUDENTS RETURN TO MERCY COLLEGE FOR THEIR ONE YEAR REUNION

Class of 2017 Students return to Mercy College for their One Year Reunion

Alana Barber Embrace your opportunities; get involved and have fun!

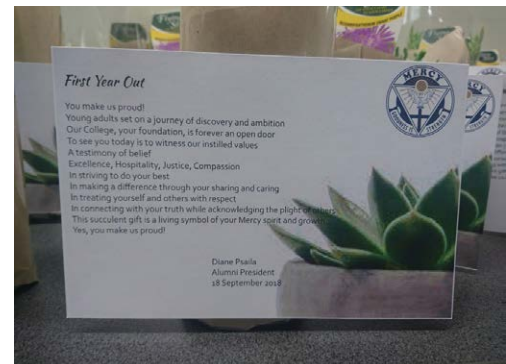
Vikaye Sithole The clues are found in your strengths and talents!

Elisa Cocomello Don't take it for granted!

Jess Speechley The teachers are always there to help, so just ask!



From left: Alana Barber, Vikaye Sithole, Elisa Cocomello and Jess Speechley



Create a good support network

JALA MOUSHI CLASS OF 2013

In my communications with Jala, it soon became apparent that her dedication to her five years of pharmaceutical studies and perseverance to succeed has brought her to these final months in realising her goal – Bachelor of Pharmacy (Honours) and Commerce at Monash University.

A family background in healthcare has influenced Jala to follow in their steps. In 2016 the involvement in the Pharmacy Student community saw her sitting as the Australian chairperson on the International Pharmaceutical Students'

'Looking back now, I can safely say I wasn't ever too caught up with the little things and I think that made my College experience much easier and smoother.'

'My advice to all VCE students is to make sure you have a good support network-especially a senior such as a teacher or a tutor, who understands what you are going through and is there to support you through it.'

Jala has enjoyed the company of pharmacists and pharmacy students from all over the world and recently travelled to a remote area of Australia for a clinical placement.'

'Completing year 12 with strong academic results is a milestone I like to remind myself of when I feel overwhelmed with my university studies- "if I was able to do it then, then why can't I do it now?" This resolve to pick myself up seems to always do the trick for me!

I highly encourage travelling wide and far to broaden your life experiences and knowledge! There is something magical you gain through travelling that you can't gain through anything else.'



Alumni Reunion 21 OCTOBER 2018

Concept Planning.

The Storyboards:

- generations on common ground – then and now
- impact statements from featured Alumni
- a lifetime of connections over a 'good cup of tea.'

Our annual reunion was a great success with attendance from many peer years; from foundation students, (Maree Helliard and Julie Beard) to recent years, in particular Class of 2008. There has been significant progress over the past year in reaching out and connecting with past students and staff, in spreading the good cheer in encouraging generations to come together and celebrate the connection that is Mercy.

The storyboards on the front fence told a significant story: A story of Mercy values; Compassion, Justice, Hospitality and Excellence. A story of connecting the present with the past to encourage the future. A story of belonging, of ambition and lifelong friendships that started right here and remain steadfast over the test of time. Rebecca Allaoui, recipient of the Spirit of Mercy award 2018 proudly stands next to 'her' storyboard; her Year 12 class alongside the first students of Mercy College.



A balance between work and home

CLAUDIA LOUIS (NEE JOSEPH) CLASS OF 1992

A student back then, a staff member now.

Claudia was introduced to me by Principal Ms Lila McNerney. Claudia's inspirational story is not only a testimony of the importance to set goals and strive to achieve success but it is significantly about the importance of finding a balance between work and home life.

Opportunity through discovery has resulted in Claudia becoming a multi-cultural aide / learning support officer at Mercy College that she enjoys immensely. There is a mutual respect between the students and Claudia and she has this advice for students:

Use the services that your school offers, such as homework and maths clubs, 1:1 support, tutoring... as often as possible.

Mercy taught me to be a compassionate, determined person, and to be accepting of others. All qualities that I encourage my own family to follow...

Volunteering as a teacher at a Saturday language school exposed that I really like teaching, and that the students liked having me teaching them. That experience led me to my employment here at Mercy, and I am currently enjoying that ride immensely. Especially re- learning linear equations!

My current position as a multicultural aide/LSO has connected me with many different cultures and background, especially because I do some of the translating at parent – teacher meetings here at the College.





All Souls Day 2018

In honour of our dearly departed

A precious life gone
We share a common bond
Footsteps that echoed along these
school corridors
A period of discovery and growth
Your contribution was a gift
Touching so many
Your spirit lives on...

Diane Psaila All Souls Day 2018

FAYE KENNEDY (NEE O'LEARY) AND MARIA CUGNETTO

FAYE KENNEDY (NEE O'LEARY)

15/8/1952 – 1/1/2013

In Memory of Foundation Student (School Captain)

Angela Rowe (De Nato) foundation student pays tribute to Faye.

It was in Form 5 when our Principal Sister Mary Bonaventure decided the school students would vote for our first School Captain. Faye was voted in as first College captain.

She was a very popular choice for Captain both from the students and the staff and she embraced her role.

She was a natural leader, she was always approachable, had charisma, she had a warmth and she was a caring person and would take the time to listen and involve herself and help other students in any way she could.

I was asked what message I think Faye might wish to pass onto the current students. Faye's girls and I had lunch last week as we do every month or so and I put this question to them. We all had the same answer, Faye would most likely say,

'Do want you want to do in life, embrace it and most importantly enjoy it. Follow your dream. Family and friends are much more important than money and professions. Friendships can last a life time'

And ours did.

We miss you our dear friend.

MARIA CUGNETTO

22/05/1960 – 18/08/2010

In memory of Maria Cugnetto Class of 1976 (Yr10)

The honorary recipient of the National Award for Outstanding Women in Non-Traditional Roles presented by the National Centre for Gender and Cultural Diversity 2010/2011

Maria's name was well known in engineering circles as a person who was passionate about improving technologies while minimising the carbon footprint and was instrumental in developing the smart meter.

Rosa Cugnetto, Maria's mother:

Her message to students would be to work hard to do your best. Be that someone to do something different, to push at what you are good at.. she did.. she was the only female in her class at university the year she started... How brave was that?

Maria, my beautiful, strong and clever girl. We miss you.

Night of Excellence 2018

ALUMNI GUEST SPEAKER—RITA HANNA CLASS OF 2011

Currently I work as a RE, Humanities and English teacher at Emmanuel College in Point Cook.

A few months ago, all staff at my school participated in a Staff Retreat Day, during which we were asked to draw a symbol representing our journeys as teachers. I drew a picture of a gift, wrapped in a ribbon, but the ribbon was unravelling and the gift was slightly open. This image represents my journey because ultimately, teaching has been a great gift, but a gift which continues to unravel every day. And by unravelling this gift I have encountered not only my students and my colleagues, but also in the process, I have encountered myself.

Tonight, I want to congratulate all of you on your excellence awards. It means that some part of you have leapt up to take on a challenge, to confront your weaknesses, to be resilient, and to fall deeper in love with your dreams. There is excellence in your academic achievements, but remember that there is also excellence in your hearts – you are gifts to one another and to your teachers. And as gifts may you continue to unravel, encounter others, and transform into the most honest versions of yourselves.

Thank you for this honour to speak to you tonight.



COLLEGE CO-CAPTAINS 2018

"Here at Mercy, we do not simply shape young ladies, rather, we empower strong women who will go out and make their mark in the world." – Ms Jenni Hickey

My Experience: Nicole Nabbout

These invaluable words will remain with me wherever I journey in life. These words inspire me to be ambitious, to be courageous and to aim high. As an aspiring educator and political leader, such words only make my greatest desires seem possible. This is what I will always remember about Mercy - it is the dedication and belief of each teacher who encourages our young women to recognise their purpose. It is the unwavering commitment and vision of our principal who epitomises the importance of women in leadership. In essence, it is the sense of belonging, identity and passion that is instilled within each student.

My Experience: Nikita Cosoletto

I found that the core values that Mercy strived for us to aspire to uphold created open-minded and optimistic views which could be put towards both our learning and everyday life. The Mercy College staff, co-curricular events and community opportunities allowed me to be able to enhance my senses of hospitality, excellence, compassion and justice in my everyday life, constantly seeking out ways to improve my-self, my learning and my contribution to the community. Because of this growth of personality and inspiration to become an active member of the College, it aided me to acquire the many leadership opportunities throughout my years at High School. There I learned the true meaning of wanting to make a difference and leave my mark for other students.



A note of thanks

We thank our Principal Ms Lila McInerney for her continued support of our initiatives in offering Alumni, residing locally and overseas, every opportunity to reconnect and maintain a relationship with Mercy College.

Connecting with Alumni across varied peer years has been a rewarding experience. The warmth of goodwill is spreading with a great number of Alumni sharing their insightful stories of where their journeys have taken them after leaving the College gates as a student for the last time.

Each story, unique to the individual, tells of the aspiration to push at boundaries to succeed, the determination to persist in the face of a challenge, the courage to adapt or change direction when an opportunity arises and of school friendships that remain strong over the test of time.

These stories tell me of their strength of character; of reinforcement of our founding elements, our Mercy values: Excellence, Hospitality, Justice, Compassion.

I particularly applaud Alumni for reaching out to current students with their inspirational messages of encouragement.

I was given a copy of the 2018 Yearbook. The cover holds a wealth of testimony; of belonging, of contribution, of dedication and of the vitality that was in this year, Mercy for Our Earth.

To all the Alumni I have had the pleasure to meet through feature interviews and reunions, both at the College and external venues; I thank you for your invaluable gift of connection and contribution.

We look forward to 2019 and what it will bring to build on our Alumni Foundation.

MS DIANE PSAILA

Alumni President



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our Mercy Alumni Magazine

Author and Content Design – **Ms Diane Psaila**

Special contributions – **Ms Lila McInerney and Mrs Judy Sailors**





We are Mercy!





MERCY COLLEGE

760 Sydney Road, Coburg VIC 3058

P: 03 9319 9299

E: info@mercycoburg.catholic.edu.au

mercycoburg.catholic.edu.au