On Saturday 17 May, the Mount Lilydale Mercy College Old Collegians’ Association hosted its third annual Gala Dinner in Centennial Hall. As well as an opportunity for the extended community to celebrate together, the night also recognised three Old Collegians who were inducted to the Mercy Honour Roll for 2014. Profits from the evening will go towards a 2015 Year 12 Scholarship open to all students currently in Year 11.

Current Principal Philip Morison acknowledged inductees Angela Wood BA LLB, Rosemarie Longo, Specialist Nurse and Aid Worker and Mark Evans, former Year Level Coordinator at the College, now AFL Football Operations Manager.

Former Principals Sr Beth Calthorpe rsm, Sr Nancy Freddi rsm and Bernard Dobson were in attendance as well as Sisters Madeleine and Margaret and previous Honour Roll Recipients, Jeanette Suhr OAM, Hon James Merlino MLA and Angela DiGiandomenico. The evening was hosted by President Peter Ruscitti, Vice-President Lucia Tabacchiera and Deputy Principal Michael Johnston. Committee member Luke Stephens co-ordinated the entertainment for the night which was provided by recent graduates Cassandra Black, Anthony Gerace and Harrison Wall.

Old Collegians’ Gala Dinner and Mercy Honour Roll Inductees

Old Collegians’ Business Breakfast
Dear Old Collegians of Mount Lilydale Mercy College

I am constantly reminded of the great history of our College and the great affection with which past teachers and Sisters of Mercy are held within our community. Each day I bump into something new or someone who just happens to want to tell me something. Today was one of those days. I just opened a letter. It was hand written. It bore no address, no date and no letterhead. It said and I quote verbatim:

Dear Philip (unusually formal for this author)

‘I wish to advise I intend to retire from teaching at Mt Lilydale at the end of 2014.

Since I was employed by Sister Gabriel Jennings in 1973, I have had a terrific and enjoyable time at Mt Lilydale watching it grow from a small girl’s school to a great co-ed college it is today.

However all good things come to an end and my wife... wants me to learn gardening and handyman skills. She has always been optimistic.

Yours sincerely
xxxxxxxxxx

Now, I have purposefully removed all identifiers from this letter in order to respect the privacy of the author, but I suspect that I have not provided anonymity for them. I do not know what you were doing in 1973 and for many that may seem a lifetime ago, but I can tell you that I was just starting secondary school. I think of a career of service and the number of lives that would have been touched in the forty one years. How many people would want to know of this approaching retirement?

It is interesting that in this very edition Sr Beth M Calthorpe, another who is so loved by our community, has written of the Ruby Jubilee and the great work to accomplish 40 years of co-education in the formation of Mount Lilydale Mercy College. The author of my letter witnessed all that and so much more.

I suspect that I had better take this letter and send it straight to the archives because in the years to come it will be important and of significance.

Teaching is hard work and nobody knows that better than one who has done it for forty plus years, but it is also a privilege and an honour to those that love it. I love our profession and I love those that choose it as their calling. I believe they have a gift and indeed they are a gift.

I fell in love with the profession when as a small boy I watched one of my two favourite films on the midday movie while at home sick “Goodbye Mr Chips” and “To Sir with Love” and so as I fold the letter up and place it back into its plain envelope I emotionally farewell the author and say to sir with love, farewell to the Mr Chips of Mount Lilydale Mercy College. We will miss you and may God bless as you start this time in your life of home maintenance.

This year will see a number of stalwarts of our great College retire and join the ranks of our Old Collegians.

Mr Terry Dunn, Mr Adrian O’Reilly and Mrs Colleen Anglin.

If any of you would like to send a personal congratulatory message or message of thanks to these staff please feel free to do so by emailing me at principal@mlmclilydale.catholic.edu.au. I will ensure that such messages are passed on at the appropriate time during their retirement function.

Omnia Cum Deo

God Bless

Philip A Morison

Principal
During the period that we attended the College, Mt Lilydale was a powerhouse in sport, musicals such as Pirates of Penzance and Godspell were a hit along with the creations of the year 12 Parade & Breakfast and Mercy Day that have all gone on to be a major part of the College’s annual celebrations. Fortunately, this pioneering spirit has lived on, in creating a reunion that could possibly pave the way for future reunions! With help from the Old Collegians and the Principal, Phil Morison, preparations went into overdrive proving to be a major success.

The reunion kicked off with some tours of the College to help re-jolt some old memories and to see how the College has grown since ’94. Impromptu announcements from Mr Johnston provided some great laughs before everyone came together for the first time in the College Chapel for our Reflection.

The Reflection honoured the lives of our classmates Liz Calcagno and Daniel Veldhuis, as well as some of our teachers who have passed away since leaving the College. We remembered Shaun Butler, Glenys Heath, Margaret Farrelly, Neville Howell, Lyn McLaughlin, Peter Tucker, Mark Prest and Peter Anderson. The Reflection was also a time for us to celebrate the wonderful experiences that made up our school years.

Kate Nichols led the proceedings, reflecting on the 1993 Coober Pedy Bus Accident that not only impacted our year level but the entire College community. Accompanied by live music and photo slideshows, we were also fortunate enough to have Delma Calcagno and Rob Veldhuis and their families in attendance who shared some personal stories and thoughts. Although two decades have passed, Liz, Dan and our teachers have left lasting legacies. The reflection was poignant, heartfelt and a reminder of how important it is for all of us to come together. D’artagnan Brau provided beautiful music during the reflection—thank you.

Following the reflection, the festivities began in Centennial Hall where there were refreshments, food, slideshows and live music from ‘The Flamin’ Moes’. The night was a blast with everyone partying on into the early hours. One mate of mine said that the night was up there with his wedding night! Although, he did caution me not to mention it to his wife! (Thanks Henk!) Another friend said that it was beyond all expectations and that they were looking forward to staying in touch and rekindling old friendships. Unsurprisingly, many from the class of ’94 have gone on to do great things; everything from medicine, mission work, theatre directing, agriculture... the list goes on. And in the spirit of life and its many challenges; careers, relationships, parenting, travel and its many other experiences, it is easy to not stop and reflect. The reunion allowed us to reconnect, reflect, reconcile and reactivate old friendships. It had everyone grinning from ear to ear!

An interesting fact, is as many as 10 couples from our year are happily married to other old collegians... with children!

The reunion was such a success that we would like to encourage more. However, it was only a success because of the thoughtful, hard work put into the evening from everyone involved. On behalf of the organising committee, Connie Johnston (Pignataro), Kate Nichols, Julia Jenvey (Van Der Linden), Jeanette Devanny (Van Duuren), Olivia Cox, Rebecca Abdallah (Pearce), Kristin Wear and Eve Vennell (Paciocco), I would like to thank the Old Collegians, The Principal, Mr Philip Morison, Trish Olson and the many other teachers and staff who helped us along the way.

We also raised over $1500 for the Old Collegians, some of which will go towards some memorial plaques outside the College Chapel for Daniel Veldhuis and Peter Anderson.

This reunion has reminded us of the importance of welcoming Old Collegians, past staff and students back to the school. As a Mercy community it is important that we keep reaching out, not only in times of need, but when time calls for celebration. All the best Class of ’94! Stay in touch and never forget the great times we shared up on the hill!

Luke Stephens
AIDAN CRANEY

It is hard to believe that I am now entering my 13th year of life away from Mount Lilydale Mercy College. 13 years—that is the sum of my years of primary and secondary schooling combined and yet so many of the memories remain so vivid, so tangible.

• I remember lining up in the whole-school centenary photo in 1996 as a Year 7 and marvelling at just how small a fish I was in this big pond.
• I remember the camaraderie of the Year 9 hockey team that seemed to always control games but not manage to win them.
• I remember walking the catwalk of Centennial Hall shining lights down upon the cast of ‘Guys and Dolls’ and singing along about good ol’ reliable Nathan Nathan Nathan Nathan Detroit.
• I remember how social groupings and cliques faded over the summer of 2000-2001 for the marginalised, oppressed and needy in our society who are pushed further into the darkened corners of society under political guise of ‘security’ and ‘compassion’. I see this every time I lead a group of young people marvelling at just how small a fish I was in this big pond.

I look back on my time at Mount Lilydale with great fondness. Doubtless my years there shaped who I am today. I see this every time I sit at my desk, my love for learning still strong and yet so many of the memories remain so vivid, so tangible.

ANDREW DEL BIONDO “BRIDGING THE GAP 2013

Old Collegian, Andrew Del Biondo along with friends, Tim Wilson and Mick Baker took a group of boys to Western Australia in October 2013 to facilitate better interaction with the indigenous Australians through bridging the gap. There were, of course, opportunities for sightseeing in Litchfield Park en route to Wyndham where the group met with Rebecca Mincilli, a youth worker at Ngnowar Aerwah Aboriginal Corporation. The teenage suicide rate in Australia is highest in indigenous communities and Rebecca assists families in day to day life matters. There was also a football match and barbeque where everyone instantly mingled and it was as if we had known one another for ages. Prior to returning to Melbourne, we stayed at the Kimberley Downs working cattle station, trying our hand at horse mustering, farming and barramundi fishing before flying back from Broome.

This trip was such a success we continued to raise funds to look at doing it again. We got in touch with the Plumber’s Union Earl Sitches and Johnno Mullins (Johnno is from the Tiwis) and they discussed the possibility of getting a Lilydale team together to play a curtain raiser to the Tiwi Islands Grand Final against the local rep team. We were the first from the mainland to be invited in this manner and after receiving approval from the local elder, in March 2014 we took a different group of boys (some were the same) to the Tiwi Islands. We flew to Darwin and went on a fishing charter and then caught the ferry to Bathurst Island and punt to shore where locals invited us to jump in the ute to get to the ground. It was hot and humid and the change rooms were a clean patch of grass wherever you could find some shade under a tree. The game was played in good spirits and at the end we handed over our jumpers as well as a heap of merchandise we had donated, then we watched the main Final which was fast and with very good skills.

We are planning to go to the Tiwis next year to again open the boys up to see what happens on our doorstep as the experience for all was fantastic.

ASHLEY EVANS

I graduated from Mount Lilydale Mercy College in 1998, having learned a lot and made friendships that remain today. Indeed 16 years after my time at Mount Lilydale finished I’ve travelled, worked and played sport with the same firm friends; now we’re all enjoying raising kids and sharing weddings, birthdays and Christmases together.

Upon finishing my VCE I initially studied commerce/law, but after 3 years decided I wanted to pursue a career as an educator, and have been a VCE Economics and Legal Studies teacher at McKinnon Secondary College since 2005. I have been an Assistant Principal at McKinnon since 2011.

I have fond memories of many aspects of school life, but two stand out: participating in debating and public speaking competitions, and studying Year 12 Economics with Mr Johnston as a Year 11 student. This was an experience that ultimately set the direction of my career. I became a teacher because of the impact he had on me, and have found this career to be so very rewarding.

I married my wonderful wife Catherine in 2008 at St Patrick’s in Lilydale and we have two beautiful children: Emilia who was born in 2011 and Rafferty who joined us in 2013.
LIA RICHARDSON

As I cast my mind back to remember my days at Mount Lilydale I am perplexed at the reality of it being 30 years since I put down my pen and paper for the last time, no laptops then! I first became acquainted with Mount Lilydale in 1978 when my mum, Mrs Battaglene (aka Mrs. B) worked as Sr Beth’s secretary. I would walk from St Patrick’s Primary to see mum after school for a lift home. I began my time at the College in 1980 and have many great memories. My brothers, Chris and Stephen also attended and Chris sent his 3 children there.

I have fond memories of some of the teachers who taught me and whom I still see today. One of my first memories was finding out that my Year 7 Homeroom teacher shared my first name (Mrs Leah Hill). Often little memories pop into my head like the smell on a windy day, climbing those hills coming back from the bottom oval after sport, sex education from Sister Philippa! I remember doing a quick check to make sure my top button and tie was done up when Sister Beth walked by! I remember melting carob frogs under the dryers in the toilets because that was the only way they tasted ok. I have a laugh when I think about Mrs McClue desperately trying to teach me shorthand to no avail and then there’s Mrs Olson’s energetic and colourful way of teaching art that inspired even the incredibly untalented amongst us. I also loved my experience attending “Odyssey House” with Miss Stephenson, an experience that was incredibly confronting and taught me about different choices people make and how it can hugely impact on lives. I loved going on the Central Australia trip and the Harrietville camp. I was elected Class Captain in Year 11 and was a member of the SRC. My most treasured memory was meeting and forming lifelong friendships.

I left school in 1984 and became a qualified Dental Nurse, a job I loved, remaining there for 10 years before pursuing a career in sales, becoming Area Manager for a cosmetic and Beauty Company for 3 years. I met my husband Mark when I was 20 and married 5 years later. We built our home in Lilydale where we still live today. We have two beautiful girls and I was lucky enough to stay at home with them until they started school. I can honestly say they were very special times and some of the most wonderful years of my life. Now I work full time as Area Manager for another very dynamic and successful beauty and accessory company.

I am still connected to the school with my 2 teenage girls also attending, it is really strange when they talk about their teachers and they had once been mine! I am on the P and F committee and help out where I can. I am proud of my association with the College and believe Mount Lilydale Mercy College impacted on my life greatly and helped mold me into the person I am today.

COMMONWEALTH GOLD!

Mount Lilydale Mercy College had three past students represent Australia at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games. Brother and sister Vannara and Sociata Be for weightlifting and Andrew Moloney for boxing.

Glasgow was the first Commonwealth games for brother and sister Vannara and Sociata Be. They competed in the 62kg and 53kg weight class respectively. A great performance from Vannara saw him not quite lift his Personal best and finished in 9th place. Sociata was even closer to her personal bests just falling short by a few kg and placing 7th.

Andrew competes in the 52kg flyweight category, 4kg heavier than when he competed in Delhi for the 2010 Commonwealth Games where he was eliminated in the quarter finals. This time was to be different; Andrew beat local favourite Reece McFadden to advance to the Gold medal fight where he came up against Pakistan’s Muhammad Waseem. With years of hard work behind him he wasn’t going to let this opportunity slip winning by a unanimous decision and taking the GOLD!

AUSTRALIAN MUAY THAI CHAMPION

Another past Mount Lilydale student is excelling in his chosen sport. Nathan ‘Dynamite’ Carroll commenced at the College in 2005 and finished in 2009. He began training Muay Thai at a gym within walking distance from the school. As he progressed with his training, his talent, ability and determination became well known.

Nathan’s hard work and determination have been pushed to the limits with grueling training camps in Thailand that involved daily runs at the break of light as well as daily sparring and training sessions. All of this has paid off as he is currently the IKBF (International Kick Boxing Federation) Victorian and Australian champion.

Nathan will be representing Australia in the South Pacific title fight against a New Zealand opponent in November.

Daniel Dickson
In response to the request of the Catholic Education Office to meet the demand for boys’ secondary education in the rapidly expanding district, the Sisters of Mercy agreed to the changeover of their girls’ Day and Boarding Prep - Year 12 School to become a 7-12 Secondary College. In January 1975 144 boys were enrolled in what was the beginning of co-education at the newly named Mount Lilydale College.

Those who remember the first few years will recall that the rapid change-over from girls’ only school to co-education caused initial adjustment problems including financial restraints, lack of facilities, ratio of boys to girls [1:3] especially higher [1:5] in the senior classes, recruitment of additional male staff and re-structure of the curriculum to meet the diverse needs of the co-education model.

However despite these and other challenges the College grew slowly in numbers. By 1981 the Primary classes were gradually phased out, facilities expanded, and the ratio boys to girls were equal. By the end of the first decade Mount Lilydale was recognised as a prominent College serving the needs of the local area. From this slow beginning the College has become today recognised within the State as a leading educational centre of excellence.

My memories of my time at the College are numerous but when I left at the end of 1989 I experienced not only a sense of sadness but genuine gratitude for having had the opportunity to work and serve such a wonderful community for fourteen years. I believed that the College would continue to grow and enrich the lives of many young students which is evidenced by the student numbers increasing from 1230 students since 1989 to 1465 students in 2014. Recently when reflecting on the tremendous development of the College over the forty years and the numbers of staff, students, families and volunteers that have been part of this journey I was reminded of a line from Vincent Van Gogh when he stated:

GREAT THINGS ARE NOT DONE BY IMPULSE,
BUT BY A SERIES OF SMALL THINGS BROUGHT TOGETHER

This is true of all that have been part of the journey. Let each person whether student, teacher, support staff, grounds staff, parent, volunteers, or principal know that Mount Lilydale Mercy College is the community that it is because of the journey each has shared, touched others and contributed in their own way to the development of our College.

May 2015 be a time of joyful celebration for all as each celebrates all that the College has been and will be for the next forty years.

Beth M Calthorpe rsm

As 2015 will mark the fortieth anniversary of Mount Lilydale Mercy College we have much to celebrate but perhaps a few words should first focus on the beginning years which formed the role that was to be our challenge.
On returning from a year living in England we were enrolled at the College in 1974. It was made very clear to us by both family and friends that we were going to The Ladies College. This was a school for young ladies where hats and gloves were worn in public and the Sisters expected beautiful manners and dignified behaviour. We certainly found this when we arrived in our brown pinafores and pleated skirts.

I was lucky to be able to start in Grade 2 as there was already talk of the primary classes finishing in favour of girls attending their local parish primary school but it was not until 1975 that we all knew why the primary classes were being phased out. The BOYS were coming!

Many people would think that there would have been many signs of this coming change but truthfully the only visible sign we remember was a wall appearing down the middle of the north corridor girls toilets and the sign on the door at one end being changed from girls to boys. Later when we had to replace uniform we realised our lovely brown skirts were gone in favour of grey to match the boy's trousers and slowly everything else turned to our now traditional blue and gold.

During my time Year 7 and 8 classes were single sex so it was Year 9 before we really spent time with the boys and the first weeks of Year 9 were very unsettled as everyone got used to each other. Classes changed more slowly with girls still doing sewing while boys did woodwork and we are all thankful this is no longer the way curriculum is organised.

If we were asked to describe the first boys who came then there were certainly those who came because they lived closer to Mount Lilydale than Aquinas or for the first time were close enough to a catholic school. However, some of us still remain suspicious that the opportunity for other schools to divert their more, shall we say, troublesome students was taken and some very adventurous boys arrived. Were we ready for them? Probably not but thanks to the strong will and hard work of the Sisters, especially Sister Beth it worked and the College prospered offering thousands of girls and boys the chance of a wonderful Catholic education.

Gail Preston (nee Lerpiniere 1974-1984)
Linda Zinghini (nee Lerpiniere 1974 -1980)
Late last year the committee of Mt Lilydale Old Collegians Soccer Club committed themselves to four major goals for the upcoming 2014 season, appoint a full time senior coach, commence work on new flood lights, re-invest in local sponsorships and establish two full strength seniors and reserves teams.

With hard work and dedication all four major goals were achieved at the commencement of the season and our flood lights are now 50% completed with one side of the pitch finished. We would like to acknowledge and express our gratitude to all of the sponsors that have supported our club for the 2014 season; the committee is deeply appreciative of the local community support.

Securing a full-time senior coach was crucial in establishing and re-strengthening our squad from last year. In December 2013, the club announced the appointment of Paul Psathas an experienced and dedicated coach to lead the club into the 2014 season and beyond.

Paul’s announcement immediately attracted players from all areas of Melbourne to the club’s doorstep. Beyond our expectations the club managed to sign up 40+ players, both our seniors and reserves squad were created by a mix of young and old and fully experienced players.

Our on field performance has greatly improved playing in the Bayside League Premier competition. Our senior’s squad has maintained a top 3 position throughout the season, as well as a quarter finals spot in the league’s knock-out FA Cup competition. Our reserves squad has also exceeded expectations by playing competitive soccer throughout maintaining a mid-table position throughout the season.

Once again we extend our gratitude to the school’s management and ground staff in what has become the best playing surface in the local Bayside Soccer Competition.

Players are wanted for the upcoming 2015 season
Open Age: 17 years+. Please stay up to date and visit us online at http://www.mlocsc.com.au or please email us on info@mlocsc.com.au

Vince D’Alessandro
MLOCSC President

Mr Peter Anderson, former teacher and inspiration in his fight against Motor Neurone disease.
Sister Mildred, former teacher who died in August aged 106.