Ancient wisdom for a modern world

In April Ms Richardson joined the Benedictine Pilgrimage to Rome, Norcia, the birthplace of St Benedict and Scholastica, and to Subiaco and Monte Cassino, two of the places where Benedict, the father of monasticism, started his communities; then to England and to Douai with visits to the Boarding schools of Downside and Ampleforth. It was Spring, and the land was bursting into life after winter.

“I am very grateful that in this final year of principalship I have been given the gift of this transformative pilgrimage. To quote Macrina Wiederkehr: The pilgrim knows that life giving challenges will emerge. A pilgrimage is not a vacation; it is a transformational journey during which significant change takes place. New insights are gained. Deeper understanding is attained. New and old places of the heart are visited. Blessings are received and healing takes place. On return life is seen with different eyes. Nothing will ever be quite the same again.”

Looking back to 1990 over those 25 tumultuous and successful years, the College is a totally different place, transformed much like the Inner West of Sydney. In 1990 I compared the College community to a merry-go-round. It is only when all the people and pieces come together and the wheels go round that everything begins to make sense, the feeling of adventure and excitement overtakes us and the true significance of the experience hits us.

The essence of being a school leader is bringing people together as a team and getting them to be part of the merry-go-round. It is as a team that vision and mission are achieved. Nothing I have achieved here at Schols has been through me alone. Each staff member, student and parent has contributed to the enterprise, as have the sisters and ex-students.

I have started to organise, file and put things in place for Mrs Rayment. My office needs clearing out and the trinkets and paintings which surround me need to be packed away. These items are both symbolic and significant.

Glass Snowdrops! Capturing the beauty and fragility of the landscape, they remind me of my parents and family and the many different landscapes of my life: the Highlands of Scotland, the grandeur of Kata Tjuta and Uluru in the heart of central Australia and that dear green place in Sydney that is Schols.

Tim Winton uses a phrase, ‘the natural world leans in to the human world and longs to be noticed’. Awareness of climate change, the environment and its sustainability is an urgent imperative in the 21st century.

The second item is an indigenous Cross made by the women of Santa Teresa, 80 kms from Alice Springs in the Western Desert. It brings home to me our commitment as a school and a nation to Indigenous Education. It is the most important work I have done as an educator in a long career. Nothing has given me greater satisfaction than to see young Aboriginal women graduate. I know this work will continue to thrive, I am very proud of our success and grateful also for the support that Government, IYLP, Foundations like AIEF and our own community have given these original owners of the land.

The painting by Chinese artist, Wei Ping that depicts an adolescent suddenly hit by that Eureka moment when she really knows what and why she is learning and where it fits.

(Did you know? Winifred Pak Pay from Darwin was the first Chinese girl to board at St Scholastica’s, being admitted at the age of 12 in 1934.)

An angel with a book, which for me is the symbol of knowledge and wisdom. Today’s student would use a computer. The angel represents our daughters, our students, our Schols girls. Above all else we want them to love learning and recognise that it is lifelong. We want them to develop a passion for a subject and develop their particular talent working in partnership with their teachers.

My little silver flautist, the symbol of all that is creative and vibrant among our talented girls: Music, Drama, Visual Arts, Design & Technology, Films and Cartoons. These are ways for young people to develop discipline, emotional intelligence, take risks in a safe environment and build self-esteem; to explore the day to day culture of our world and tease out the problems and injustices. I will miss the plays, concerts, speech nights, exhibitions and films. They have made us laugh, reduced us to tears, inspired us and made us more aware.
My whistle. I have rarely used it but it represents the sport which is important to so many of our families and girls at Schols. When I first came to the College there were only four sports played: netball, basketball, softball and soccer. Now there are so many more and sport starts in 2015. Sport keeps our students fit, teaching them much about collaboration and team work.

Photo of Lucy O'Driscoll, who left Schols in 1995. She gained an ATAR of 99.8 which was and remains the highest HSC rank since I came to the College. You would think that she had the world at her feet. Yet within a few months at university she took her own life. I keep her photo where I can look at it every day to remind me how precious our children are and how vulnerable in this 21st century world, where each night the media bring into our living rooms conflict, destruction, famine, disease and fragmentation. No wonder we are often surrounded by stress, anxiety and depression.

Refugee asylum seeker poster. ‘Welcome to Australia – for those who’ve come across the seas.’ The first official boat people in Australia arrived in 1788 with the first fleet. The Indigenous, according to Inga Clendinnen, danced with the boat people from England: they welcomed the strangers. Now we incarcerate them offshore. Our reputation overseas is in tatters. We see fit to join in a war against the countries the asylum seekers flee yet will not give asylum to those escaping the conflict! Students, staff and parents at Schols are involved in many programs which address inequity. They are taking up the call to be Good Neighbour to others, like the Good Samaritan of the parable.

I take great pleasure in knowing that Kate Rayment, who will take over the leadership of the College in January, is a woman who listens with the ear of her heart and will surely build on the College’s strong reputation for social justice.

I thank the Sisters and Sr Clare Condon in particular for entrusting me with the leadership of Schols for these last 25 years. I thank our staff for their support and hard work. The ever changing landscape of society coupled with greater accountability makes teaching an increasingly demanding profession although it brings great fulfilment. I thank the Board of Directors and Members for their generous and expert support and the Ex-students for all they have done to keep the traditions of the College alive. You would think that she had the world at her feet and I keep her photo where I can look at it every day to remind me how precious our children are and how vulnerable in this 21st century world, where each night the media bring into our living rooms conflict, destruction, famine, disease and fragmentation. No wonder we are often surrounded by stress, anxiety and depression.

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Sport keeps our students fit, teaching them much about collaboration and team work.

Ciara Morris, College Vice Captain, Year 12 Graduation, 18/9/2014

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Ciara Morris, College Vice Captain, Year 12 Graduation, 18/9/2014

You have been a cheerleader and supporter at each event. You constantly push the boundaries of social action. You take risks for us, and we would like to thank you.

…for your support and celebration of Australia’s Indigenous young women.

…for involving the school in social justice causes such as refugee rights and environmental activism.

…for the opportunity to discuss with Cardinal Pell a woman’s role in the Catholic Church.

…for each and every International Women’s Day Breakfast and the awe inspiring speakers you had us meet and converse with.

…for setting an example for Schols Girls that they too can hold the top job, be leaders, speak their minds, live with respect for all people and do so in peace.

Just like former Irish President Mary Robinson you know that “everybody matters”.

Entrants in this year’s Scholarchie Portrait Prize said:

My work shows how Ms Richardson cares and looks over all of us at St Scholastica’s. Freya Mulhall (Yr 7)

Hayley Cumming (Yr 11) chose to do an embroidery because ‘Embroidery is a labour of love, a detailed, lengthy, loving process representative of Ms Richardson’s approach to leading the school’.

Ms Richardson inspires me in many ways with her delightful smile and humility so I decided to enter this competition. I don’t expect to win but feel grateful and honoured to have entered. Razelle Zabala (Yr 8)
I use language, understand through language and create with it. Literacy is a basic human right.

The Sun sets out of sight, behind my hotel, but the colours it throws up overhead are still dazzling. I'm sitting on the balcony looking over the ocean and at a sign 'No Swimming: Crocodiles'. It's a beautiful and sometimes unnerving place, Groote Eylandt, N.T. I've joked with colleagues about how, here, the more magnificent looking the creature, the more deadly it's likely to be. Things here have been unchanged for a long, long time. This place, like countless others, holds many stories. Some stories are preserved, through indigenous carvings and paintings, depictions on rocks, and oral traditions passed down, but more are lost with every passing generation.

A teacher arrives from a local school. She wants a quiet moment to sit and ask about language processing. We get a drink and she tells me her challenges. She's trying to support a school community where English is a second language and where literacy is low. We talk about something called phonological awareness and agree one's first language – for the indigenous community on Groote, the Anindilyakwa language – is a great place to start with developing foundations for literacy. We talk about how great it is that linguists work in the region to preserve the language in a literate form, and how signs are written in Anindilyakwa where possible. We decide the issues surrounding change are not just about language. They're huge, insurmountable; they're cultural, social, historical, political, and every other 'al' there is. Overwhelmed, we take a break, she asks me about speech pathology and how I got into it – a much easier topic.

My years at St Scholastica's nurtured an appreciation for language in all its forms; written, visual, and performance. I love language so much I did several degrees in fine arts and English literature. For work as a copywriter, I've used language to influence. Eventually, I decided using language to market stuff wasn't what I wanted to do. That's when I decided to be a speech pathologist; I haven't looked back.

I appreciate language, I use language, I understand through language and I create with it. We access language to appreciate literary fiction, and we use it to read the electricity bill. It's too easy to forget that communication, access to language and, more specifically, literacy is a basic human right. An ability that many of us take for granted, and some of us still do not have.

This teacher wants to learn more about language processing so she can support literacy development. I'm pleased to hear it. Teaching is where it all starts – it's where it started for me; being nurtured to create and explore with language at school. The teacher leaves. I wonder what she's taken away from our conversation and how she will use what we have discussed to continue to enrich her students. The issues are huge, insurmountable, but I feel a sliver of hope and anticipation – like the rest of us, her students will have stories to tell, but one day I think I might actually hear them.

Kimberley Payne (1996) who remembers with fondness her teachers including Mrs Barbara Crawford, her English teacher with the distinctive Bronx accent.

Below: Kimberley doing language testing with a student whose first language is Anindilyakwa

**THE FIRST BEAUTIFUL THINGS HIS FATHER KNEW...**

When 2014 Booker Prize winner, Richard Flanagan, was announced in December as co-winner of the Prime Minister’s Fiction Award for *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, he in turn announced his intention of giving his $40,000 prize money to the Indigenous Literacy Foundation.

“The lesson that my father took from the POW camps was that the measure of any civilised society was its willingness to look after its weakest.”

Flanagan said words were the first beautiful things his father, Archie, knew, and he wanted to help close the Indigenous literacy gap.

“If just one of those children in turn becomes a writer, if just one brings to Australia and to the world an idea of the universe that arises out of that glorious lineage of 60,000 years of Australian civilisation, then I will think this prize has rewarded not just me, but us all,” he said.

**SUCCESS FOR A YOUNG WRITER FROM SCHOLS**

In November Isabella Brown (Yr 12 2014) won first place for her story titled *For the Best* that was entered in the Lionel Bowen Young Writers’ Award presented at UNSW. The judges said that her story was “The strongest piece of writing in the collection - a truly stunning piece of work that is beautifully crafted. This is a heartbreaking account of an unplanned pregnancy that is poignant and taut with the tensions of desire, disappointment and unrealised potential, viewed through the naïve narration of a younger sibling. Simply superb work.” Her story appears in an anthology published by Juvenilia Press.
In 2014 three students from Wayo Kudan, Tokyo spent 10 months in Sydney on exchange. They are pictured at school and at the airport on departure. The College acknowledges the generosity of their host families and the indefatigable energy of our Japanese teacher, Ms Miki Alves.

These are their stories.

This year is the biggest experience of my life. I am grateful to everyone who has helped me. I was determined to study abroad, when I was in year 9. I liked English more than any other subject, and wanted to improve my English for my future. Japanese people know a lot of English grammar and vocabulary. That is because we study English at school; but we cannot speak English fluently as we are taught English in Japanese! At first I think that I was extremely quiet. I don't think I understood what was going on in any conversation. Whenever I spoke English I felt intimidated, but at the same time it made me keep on working hard. At first I was shy to ask the teachers questions because I wasn't used to the open relationship between students and teachers here. However, during my time at St Scholastica's College I have learnt to ask more questions, and I especially appreciate the fact that, when I ask questions, people go to a lot of effort to explain things in ways that I can understand. From my experiences in the exchange program I believe that I have become a stronger person, who is more independent, and I have developed a greater appreciation for the relationships in my life and their importance. Thank you for all the things everyone has done for me during my stay in Australia - from the very deepest of my heart.

Sachiko Kizuka

In February I arrived at Sydney Airport with lots of baggage, expectation and anxiety. My dream of studying abroad since the end of Year 8 came true. Everything was very new and different. Everyone spoke English, trees lined every street and it was a very multicultural country. There were also similarities, such as the abundance of Japanese cars! I remember I found it hard to believe I was actually here, it felt like I had come to a new world.

I soon began school in Australia. I was little bit confused and nervous to come to a new school with different students, teachers and language. However, I still remember how many friends and teachers helped me. It was very hard and stressful when I couldn’t say what I wanted to say and couldn’t understand. My host families were very kind to me and the experience of living so far from home and with people who are not my family taught me to be very strong. I have learnt that family is the most important thing in life.

I look forward to coming back and seeing you again someday. I hope a good international exchange between St Scholastica's College and Wayo Kudan will continue.

Sena Kusakari

The relationship between teachers and students here is positive. Students are also able to think for themselves. I like Australian classes. This school holds many events. Students take part in many different things, and teachers value the students’ opinions. I was surprised when I found out there were many electives. I chose Drama so that I could practice speaking English. In Japan, there is no drama class, so it was difficult for me. When there was group work, I tried to communicate with the other students, and I needed to be brave when I spoke English in front of the others. Studying abroad seemed fun at first, but a lot of things that I didn’t imagine happened. But I knew when I was up against the wall, I could recover and grow more. I have learned to continue without giving up. Studying abroad is the best memory of my life so far.

Marina Kusunoki

DUBBO/SYDNEY/SANKT AUGUSTIN

Sankt Augustin you ask? It’s a town in the Rhein-Sieg district in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. It is named after Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430) and situated about eight km north-east of Bonn. The Dubbo based family of Year 9 Boarder, Maggie Sewell, organised a delightfully successful exchange for Anna Thea Carl from Germany. Blessed with excellent English, Anna Thea settled in easily, enjoying both the best of country NSW thanks to the hospitality of the Sewells and the bright city lights of Glebe courtesy of the Boarding College. Her mum said she was returning home reluctantly: “I think she lost a part of her heart at your place.” The Carl family in turn are looking forward to welcoming Maggie with the hope that the cold, ice and rain of Germany in winter will be a pleasing novelty for their Australian visitor who – as it happens – speaks no German. We look forward to hearing her adventures on her return.

Anna Thea and Maggie above at Dubbo’s Western Plains Zoo

Kiara Sanggaran (Yr 10): I have finally reached my 3 month goal today. I am happy and grateful to be here, as I have always wanted to come to Japan ever since the start of high school. To know that today marks three months of my exchange in Japan really surprises me. Learning how to speak another language and having the confidence to talk to other native speakers is a challenge, but it is a challenge that I have very much enjoyed and never complained about. I am happy to face it head first. Sure, there have been tough times and times of doubt but, my advice to anyone trying to become better at a foreign language, is to never be afraid of making mistakes because those mistakes are the ones you learn from. There is nothing more rewarding than being able to have a lovely long conversation with a friend or teacher. If you are ever offered a chance to go on exchange, do it! It will change your life. I have made many precious memories in Japan and I have made many relationships with others that I will always hold precious to me.

Kiara Sanggaran (Yr 10) on exchange in Japan Pictured above in kimono and with her hosts

PARTNERS IN DIALOGUE LEARN UNDERSTANDING FROM EACH OTHER

Make a welcome space for those who come your way—that’s the Good Samaritan way.
STAFF CHANGES AT ST SCHOLASTICA’S

After three very creative, busy and fulfilling years at the College as Assistant Principal – Pastoral Care, Ms Elizabeth Carnegie (below left) leaves us to take on the role of Principal at another Good Samaritan school – Stella Maris College at Manly. Our loss is Stella’s gain and Elizabeth takes to her new role the great love, energy and leadership qualities that she shared with us so generously at Schols. Ms Jennifer Petchler, formerly Studies Coordinator HSIE (History) and well known to many of you, takes up the role of Assistant Principal – Pastoral Care for 2015.

Ms Allyson Mascarenhas (above right), well known over the past six years to students and families in her roles as Science teacher and Curriculum Coordinator (in 2014 also Administration Coordinator), has accepted a position as Deputy Principal – Curriculum at Monte Sant’Angelo Mercy College, North Sydney. She goes with the gratitude and best wishes of the College community and warm congratulations from us all. Ms Margaret Taborda, Senior Guidance Coordinator, moves into the role of Curriculum Coordinator and Mr Sebastian Puntillo from the Mathematics Department, moves into the role of Administration Coordinator for 2015.

EX-STUDENTS’ UNION NEWS

On Sunday 25th May we held our annual reunion; a beautiful mass was celebrated in the Chapel followed by a gathering in the Trixie Forest Centre to connect again. This year we were delighted to welcome Biddy Kennedy who came with her family. Biddy left the College in 1930 – 84 years ago! She was pleased to visit her Alma Mater and must have been struck by the numerous changes over the years. The girls from 1964 celebrated their 50th anniversary and we all enjoyed a glass of champagne and light lunch followed by a visit to the Archives to pore over photos and documents that reignited so many happy memories.

Of course, following the announcement of Loretto’s retirement, this was to be her ‘last’ Reunion and this added a nostalgic and celebratory quality to our conversations. Time does pass and Loretto will now join the line of much loved past principals and will always be a most honoured guest at our annual reunions when she makes her way back to Sydney. She must have been struck by the numerous changes over the years.

Ms Kate Rayment, new Principal of St Scholastica’s College

This has been a special year for the community of St Scholastica’s College, marking as it does the final and twenty-fifth year of Loretto Richardson’s time as principal. Since the announcement in February of her intention to retire at the end of 2014, a major focus of the Board’s work has been the recruitment of a new principal who will build on Loretto’s legacy and lead the College into the next period of its development.

By May we were advertising, having engaged the services of Korn Ferry to assist in the process and having carried out extensive consultation with the College community to capture its expectations and hopes for the future. By August, after an extensive recruitment process which attracted a wide range of outstanding candidates, we were delighted to announce that Mrs Kate Rayment had been appointed Principal of St Scholastica’s College for 2015. She was an outstanding candidate for the role – highly qualified, with wide and valuable experience and strong recommendations.

Mrs Rayment comes to us from her role as Principal of McCarthy Catholic College Tamworth. She has also had international experience as Director of Performing Arts at the Australian International School, Kuala Lumpur; she has taught and loves Music – a good omen for the flourishing musical culture at Schols. Kate holds the qualifications of Master of Arts (Theological Studies), Master of Leadership and Management in Education, Certificate of Systematic Theology and Bachelor of Education (Music). She is currently undertaking studies in the Doctor of Education program at the Australian Catholic University. In March 2014 Kate was a recipient of the Diocesan Award for Outstanding Leadership.

By October Kate had visited the College and met with staff, student leaders and parents, as well as joining fellow Good Samaritan principals at the GSE Assembly at Pennant Hills. She is no stranger to Sydney and is very much looking forward to joining our vibrant Good Samaritan community at Glebe, as we look forward to welcoming her when she takes up the reins in January.

Life is always subject to the unexpected and mid-year our former Board Chair, Dr Mark Askew, who works with the Broken Bay Diocese Education Office, fell seriously ill while attending a summer school in Boston. Mark is well recovered now and back at his “day job” and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge his significant contribution and leadership of the College Board for the past three years. We are delighted that Mark has resumed his “night job” as a member of the Board of Directors so that we continue to benefit from his wide educational experience.

As a result of these circumstances, in August I was honoured to accept the nomination of fellow directors as Chair of Board, a challenging and exciting role for a very proud ex-student. On behalf of the Board, I express my thanks to the parents, students and staff of St Scholastica’s who continue to make the College the unique place it is and whom I look forward to meeting in the course of 2015.

I would also like to share with the College community the sad news from Melbourne of the recent death of Patricia Sutherland (Harley). Pat was a highly esteemed educator, an ex-student of Schols (1945) and for many years a much loved Director of the College. Current Director Sr Marilyn Kelleher sgs, Deputy Chair Mrs Susan Pedemont and former Chair Stephen Davidson were able to attend the funeral to celebrate Pat’s life, work and the family she adored.

Cheryl Akle, Chair of Board of Directors, St Scholastica’s College

Mrs Kate Rayment, new Principal of St Scholastica’s College, with 2015 College Captains at McCarthy Catholic College Tamworth.
Class of 2004 Reunion

Seems like only yesterday…

On the evening of Saturday, 22 November 2014, the Class of 2004 gathered at the Marble Bar to celebrate their 10 Year Reunion. It was a night of reminiscing with classmates and teachers of past school days as well as catching up on the past ten years. We laughed as memories flooded back. No one could believe how fast ten years had flown. It was ten years to the day that we had celebrated our Formal. We especially thank Ms Richardson, Ms Barnett, Ms Spaulding, Ms McCluskie and Mr Ross who joined us. We are grateful to all the staff at Schols for supporting, encouraging and helping us become the women we are today.

Katrina Fuller (2004)

On 18th October a ‘Happy 50th Birthday’ reunion was held by graduates from 1979-1981; a chance to acknowledge the change from young women starting out in life to self-assured women wishing to connect and celebrate with friends and faculty. We reminisced about classroom antics, school yard injustices and missing lines in Iolanthe, and discussed the challenges that school and boarding life had offered.

It was a privilege to again meet Sister Teresita (Joan Sexton), who knew our names and recognised so many of us even though the years had certainly wrought change! Accompanying this amazing woman were the fabulous Sisters Marilyn, Joan Sexton, Colleen and Anne, Mr Tapsell, Mr McArthur, Mr Hekeik, Ms Lyneham (Tapsell), Ms Smith (Lourey), Ms Johnson (Cheney), Ms Dengate, Ms Hutch, Ms Mason, Ms Shaw and Ms Warner. These teachers had helped shape our future pursuits in life. Over the ensuing 4 hours, prompted by tales, insights and photos, fuelled by genuine curiosity we reflected on learning, growing and our contributions to family and community.

Our thanks to Danielle Heininger (Pierce) and Shelly Laval (Barnes) (our photographer) for organising the event along with Jane Lourey and Natalie Perri. We honoured the memory of women who did not get to celebrate with us and appreciated the effort taken by all who attended. To those who were unable to do so this time - here’s to the next extravaganza!

Maureen Edgton (Winn), 1981 School Captain

Ex-student Danielle Verde (2006) visited the College to speak with Legal Studies classes. Danielle is a lawyer who works in personal injury law with Maurice Blackman. She demystified legal work, a large part of which involves long hours listening to clients’ stories on the phone or face to face. Most legal work she explained to the students, including Ada Du and Hannah Draper pictured above with Danielle, involves negotiation or alternative dispute resolution, not the dramatic court battles we see on TV. In fact most legal cases settle on the steps outside the courtroom!

CONTACT THE EX-STUDENTS’ UNION : karendebenham@optusnet.com.au OR wellsaf@yahoo.com.au