



The Road

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

Autumn 2021

OUR COVER

THE FINAL HOURS

In 2021 Damascus College celebrates the 30th anniversary of The Final Hours which is a drama production that tells of the last few hours of Jesus' life. It is performed and celebrated over Easter and utilises both interior and exterior locations around the College grounds, involving over 40 students in both acting and technical roles. This passion play showcases not only the talents and skills of these students but the wonderful natural beauty and architecture of the Mount Clear site.

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

MATTHEW BYRNE

The Easter story has been at the heart of Damascus College and our founding communities for the past 140 years. In 2021, Damascus College is celebrating 140 years of continuous Catholic education in Ballarat, which coincides with 200 years of Catholic education nationally.

This edition of *The Road* follows on from our Easter celebrations of the triumph of life over death, and the resurrection story continues to inspire the educational offerings of this community. The Easter liturgy celebrated on Holy Thursday was the first time our school came together in prayer for a year and that was cause for celebration alone. The spirit of hope that we commemorated with young people in the wake of the pandemic and remote learning in 2020 was a wonderful expression of the continuation of our 140 years of faith-filled education here at Damascus College.

Our celebration of Easter coincided with the 30th anniversary of *The Final Hours*. Over those 30 years, so many people from our community have deeply engaged with the scripture of Holy Week through this extraordinary production. Andrew Seeary and Nicole Burness and those that support them have been remarkable in once again bringing a contemporary expression of Easter to our community – we are very fortunate! I hope you enjoy the reflection later in this edition.

In 2021 our College continues to grow in number, with 1164 young people enrolled this year. This growth has been achieved through stronger retention through to Year 12. Our increased numbers of students taking up and remaining within the VCAL program is an excellent reflection of the efforts of the staff in this area. Our Hands-on-Learning Program, or HoLP, at Year 10 has also enabled

continued engagement for some middle school students who need a bridge to the later years. This team also provides wonderful targeted support and education for these predominately Year 10 students. Over recent years the College has also expanded the support available through our counselling and diverse learning teams, and these supports have assisted in keeping greater numbers of young people at school longer.

We continue to have a committed and hardworking team, and you will see genuine acknowledgements of the wonderful contributions of exiting staff, Brendan Doyle, Deb Larsen, Ryan Docking and Liz Sarah, throughout the publication.

We have added some amazing new people and skills to our team, with the following staff joining Damascus College in 2021.

- Emma Baldwin joins the Human Resources team
- Jasmine Beaumont as a Learning Support Officer
- Susannah Berens joins the Religious Education team
- Michelle Bodey joins the English team
- Angela Crebbin joins the English team
- Christine Gawne joins the Technology team
- Adrian Lane joins the Religious Education team
- Justin Marson joins the Finance team

In 2021 our College theme comes from the first chapter of the Book of Joshua.

'Be strong and courageous; for God is with you wherever you go.'

(Joshua 1:9)



Matthew Byrne and Jonah Skewes-Clinton, Year 9 at the Swimming Carnival

We have a theme to frame our liturgies and provide a means of grounding our Catholic identity in scripture. 'Be strong and courageous; for God is with you wherever you go' was a theme that we felt built on our experience of 2020. In times of unsurety, we need to face up to our challenges with strength and courage and know that we are not alone. The manifestation of God's love is present in the people and environment around us, and helping young people to grow in resilience through knowledge of the love of God is something we hope will further equip them for the world in which they learn and grow.

There were some amazing individual results for the graduating class of 2020. Their achievement was completing their schooling under the most trying of circumstances and as a community, we are so proud of the way the graduates of 2020 made the most of the opportunities available to them. Grace Young-Harvey was a delightful dux and she was genuinely appreciative of her school and family in acknowledging her success. Grace achieved an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) of 99.4, an outstanding achievement. I again congratulate our most recent alumni on their many successes!

It has been a busy term in the sporting arena and our Sports Coordinator, Nicole Hexter, is a wonderful leader within our community. I hope you enjoy the reflection on this season of rowing by Paul Blanchfield, who heads up our rowing programs. Our Swimming, Athletics, Rowing and Term 1 BAS completions have all been wonderful opportunities for our young people and I acknowledge Nikki's leadership in this space and all who support her.

As we proudly celebrate 140 years of Catholic education, building on our shared Mercy and Diocesan history since 1881, we continue to adapt as a community to respond to the needs of the times.

Modern and innovative educational governance has seen the current Co-Governors of Damascus College, the Association of Canonical Administrators of the Parishes of Greater Ballarat, and the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea invite the Damascus College Board into a process of discernment on the future governance for the College.

Following a thorough process of discernment, the Board has made a recommendation to the respective entities that the future governance of the College be transitioned to the company formed by the Bishop of Ballarat, titled Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL). DOBCEL is a team of professional and committed directors who govern the schools of the Diocese for whom the Bishop of Ballarat, Rev Paul Bird, has civil responsibility.

Damascus College will continue to honour the joint charisms on which it was founded. The place of the Sisters of Mercy here in Ballarat and Catherine McAuley's legacy will continue to underpin the spiritual and educational offerings available to the Damascus College community. This will continue in collaboration with the spirit of service of the parishes from which students enrol.

For staff, students and families, a change in governance will not materially impact the College experience. However, it formally provides the College with the local experience of the DOBCEL Board and the support of the broader network of schools in the Diocese of Ballarat.

As we celebrate our 140-year history throughout 2021, we look forward to recognising the extensive contribution of the Sisters of Mercy and the parishes of greater Ballarat that have led the transition to DOBCEL, the beginning of an exciting new chapter for Damascus College.

It is an exciting time to be in education, and what better place to be than Damascus College!

IN 2021 DAMASCUS COLLEGE IS
PROUDLY CELEBRATING

140 years

OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION
building on our shared history since 1881



1881
Sacred Heart
College



1948
St Pauls
Technical College



1967
St Martin's
in the Pines



1995
Damascus
College



140 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

DAMASCUS EVENT

2021 marks the 140-year anniversary of our College, and we are proud and excited to celebrate this milestone throughout this special year.

Damascus College has a long and proud tradition, commencing with three foundation colleges dating back as early as 1881.

- Sacred Heart College commenced in 1881.
- St Paul's Technical College commenced in 1948.
- St Martin's in the Pines (Sacred Heart Senior College) commenced in 1967.

These three foundation colleges amalgamated in 1995 to form Damascus College; the junior campus was in Victoria Street and the senior campus was located in Mt Clear. In 2011, these two sites came together on the one Mt Clear location to form the current campus of Damascus College, located in Geelong Road, Mt Clear.

We are looking forward to the many internal and external celebrations and promotions as listed below.

2021 Internal Events:

- Opening Mass - Friday 12 March
- Damascus Day - Wednesday 15 September
- Awards & Achievement Evening - Wednesday 1 December

2021 Community Event:

- Gala Night – Saturday 23 October 2021

Other ways we will celebrate this anniversary include:

- Every month throughout 2021, an anniversary video will be showcased on the College social media channels and in the newsletter.
- A special anniversary publication will be produced to coincide with the Gala Night in October 2021. The community will be invited to this event.
- Anniversary badges will be distributed to current students and staff during Catholic Education week in May.

So that we can keep in touch with our alumni, we encourage past students of Sacred Heart, St Pauls, St Martins in the Pines and Damascus College to reconnect with us by updating your contact details on the Damascus website, under Community/Alumni.

For more information on the 140 Year anniversary celebrations please visit damascus.vic.edu.au





30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FINAL HOURS

DAMASCUS COLLEGE PRODUCTION

This year we celebrate the 30th anniversary of The Final Hours, which is a drama production that tells of the last few hours of Jesus' life. The performance again utilised both interior and exterior locations around the College grounds and involved over 40 students in both acting and technical roles. The play showcased not only the talents and skills of these students but the wonderful natural beauty and architecture of the Mount Clear site.

HOW THE FINAL HOURS BEGAN

Who would have thought when a group of senior drama students at the then St. Martins in the Pines stepped up onto a small wooden platform in 1989 that they would be starting one of the college's most memorable traditions. This year the biannual production of "The Final Hours" is back for its 16th season with a new cast and crew and a few new surprises.

This longstanding Easter tradition at Damascus began from humble beginnings with two lights and a simple raised stage in 1990. It has now grown slowly into the very complex theatrical event being produced this year.

From its humble beginnings 30 years ago, this passion play developed by director and designer Andrew Seearly has grown into a complex and technically challenging theatrical event. The performance, which utilises both interior and exterior locations around the Mt. Clear Campus, involves over forty students in both acting and technical roles. The play tracks the final hours of Jesus of Nazareth before being put to death on the cross. The structure and script focus on the gritty realism and raw emotions of a range of characters that witness the event.

"It is one of the most recognisable and well-known stories of the

world and it has been told for generations in so many forms," said Andrew, who has been involved in the production continuously since its inception. "Like at Christmas time, Easter's true origin is founded in an event, one that sometimes gets lost amid holidays and commercialism. The production has always been an attempt to reconnect with the true message of Easter."

One of the great joys of the performance has always been in seeing students from all year levels working as one in a great spirit of purpose and collaboration.

As we celebrate the event's 30th year, we still feel the power of this unique production. Its capacity to reflect through drama on the fundamental stories of the Christian faith still inspires and creates opportunity for reflection.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

The Damascus College motto "To Live By The Light Of Christ" is never better highlighted than by our commitment to "The Final Hours" production. This is the 16th season of this incredible and moving performance, portrayed with all the passion and sensitivity we have come to experience from a hugely talented cast of young people. This story of Jesus' final hours on earth is the heart and essence of our Catholic faith tradition.

We are immensely proud of our reflective Easter production and I commend it to all families as a tradition that has preceded the College's inception and is the lived expression of Catholic Christian identity.

Mr Matthew Byrne

Role	Student Name	Year
Sound Operator & Assistant Director	Megan O'Beirne	11
The 2021 Final Hours Cast		
Narrator	Elarin Johnson	10
Jesus	Charlie Norman	9
Pilate	Gabriel Blake	11
Pharisee	Eliza Karlake	12
1st Centurion	Caelan Mason	9
2nd Centurion	Drew Smith	10
Peter	Declan Eden	9
Barabas	Tom McKay	12
Woman #1	Jessica Dechene	9
Woman #2	Liana Canfield	10
Gaoler	Kiarna Perry	12
Husband	Brady Lucas	11
Ruth	Eloise Mc Gifford	11
St. John	Georgia Newman	12
Simon	Gemma Angeli	12
Veronica	Zoe Newman	9
Neighbour	Sage Seary	10
Woman of Jerusalem	Montana Forster	12
Employee	Payton Overall	12
Roman Official	William Hollit	9
Mary	Amy Wells	11
St. Joseph	Mikayla Montgomery	11
Crowd Member	Sinead Sugars	11
Crowd Member	Caleb Inglis	9
Crowd Member	Khyl Edward	11
Crowd Member	Arielle Watson	12
Crowd Member	Matilda Martin Block	11
Crowd Member	Lucy Leviston	9
Crowd Member	Sophie Leviston	11
Crowd Member	Niamh Seare	9
Crowd Member	Resse Watson	9
The 2021 Final Hours Crew		
Crew Captain	Jaz McBride	12
Crew	Jaz McKay	12
Crew	Tom McKay	12
Crew	Romany McKay	12
Crew	Nick Kattula	12
Crew	Rose Spencer	11
Crew	Wes Carter	10
Crew	Zoe Noakes	9
Crew	Cendrine White	9
Crew	Gemma Gale	9
Crew	Aurora Mulcahy	8
Crew	Aida Cater	8





RUNNING RINGS AROUND THE COMPETITION

ARMANI ANDERSON

Year 8 student Armani Anderson is a name to watch out for as she is running rings around the competition in the junior track and field world.

Armani is currently the third-best runner in the state in the Girls U14 100m sprint. In 2019, she won the School Sports Victoria State Championship races in the 100m and 200m sprints (12-13-year-old girls).

"I love to run. It is a place where I can relax and its free from stress," she said.

Armani said that she began running in Grade 4 with Little Athletics, and her passion, skill and determination have grown stronger ever since.

"I was good at it and found it fun."

Armani trains three times a week for 1.5 hours with a local running group and is a member of the Ballarat Harriers seniors' team.

She represented Victoria in the Nationals in 2018 and 2019 and more recently came third in the State Track and Field Championship Girls U14 100m sprint and won gold at the State Relay Championships in the U16 women's 4x100m relay in Melbourne.

"My ultimate dream is to one day run at the Commonwealth Games or Olympics and to represent my country."

Armani said that she enjoys being at Damascus as she has found a good group of friends and really likes the teachers.

"My favourite subject is Physical Education, as I love to play ball games for fun."



COLLEGE CAPTAIN

MAYA TOLLIDAY

As a dedicated and motivated student, I am honoured to not only represent the students of Damascus, but to work with the college and the wider Ballarat community as a student leader.

In 2016, when I opened the Damascus promotional video of “my school” as a Year 7 student, I did not know that I would be here in Year 12 as the College Captain. I am not only looking forward to wearing the badge as a school leader, but also to work with my close friend and co-captain Shaun, and to take on opportunities to connect with the wider community. In this way, I will learn and gain the skills and experiences to shape who I am and will be into the future.

Growing up in the small town of Buninyong, I have always been active and involved with the local town and community. Being around people is part of who I am, as I have always lived with both my parents, my younger sister, our family cat Tortoise, and our puppy Timtam (very unique names!). As a young teenager, I am a committed part-time worker at the local Buninyong Newsagency and BP Station, which also gives me another chance to interact and help those within my own community. Though, whenever I am not working or filling my days with studying, you will see me running with a passion early in the mornings or spending my afternoons with my friends at our Dance and Performing Arts school.

Another hobby of mine is volunteering. I have been a member of Aussie Action Abroad, which provides exciting community development expeditions to Nepal where participants can share their skills and abilities with remote local communities; I was lucky enough to participate in this experience in 2019. I also love studying Biology and Chemistry, learning about the world around us. After Year 12, I hope to continue my passion for science by

studying Biomedicine at University, and then one day I hope to work overseas as a Medical Aid in countries and communities that need our help.

My Damascus journey so far has played a huge part in shaping me into who I am today. When it came to choosing Damascus, I believed that it was a school that would take me on the right path and motivate me to always do what is best for me. Through each year at the College, I have had so many opportunities and experiences that I will cherish and remember forever. In 2018, I spent three days hiking, cooking and learning new skills on Year 9 camp, which was an experience I loved! Being outdoors is where I thrive, but it was great to also work with others as a team. In the same year, I was a part of the Damascus College school production, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat Musical. It was an amazing experience and I enjoyed every moment on and off the stage. One memory that I will never forget is the Year 12 Retreat at the beginning of this year, where we spent three days with our peers and staff; it made me realise how lucky I am to be a part of the Damascus community.

Through my time at Damascus, I have learnt that our community is determined to inspire students to do their best and reach their full potential, which I believe is something all students need to experience in their own educational journey. When at Damascus, I encourage students to try new things, take on challenges and participate in opportunities that provide new experiences. I know, from my own Damascus journey, that these opportunities have shaped me into the Maya Tolliday I am here today, and I’m ready to take on 2021.

Maya Tolliday, Year 12



COLLEGE CAPTAIN

SHAUN LEONARD

My name is Shaun Leonard and I am currently completing my last year of secondary education. Damascus College was always going to be the choice for myself and my brother and sister as my family has been a part of the Damascus College community for generations, with my Mum attending Sacred Heart College and my Dad attending St Paul's Technical College. All of my aunts and uncles attended both colleges, as well as St Martins in the Pines and Damascus College. My primary school Emmaus also has strong ties with Damascus College; during my six years of primary school, I gained a strong understanding of the way of life at Damascus College before even being here.

Being elected as College Captain means so much to me and I feel so grateful to be given the chance to lead our school community alongside my good friend and co-captain Maya. I think being a School Captain is not just a role, for me, it is a goal to encourage students to be involved in whatever makes them feel like themselves; to guide students to step outside of their comfort zones, to take on the amazing opportunities the College has to offer and to grow themselves as stronger individuals.

I'm looking forward to forming new relationships with people both younger and older, both students and staff of the college, collaborating with others and sharing ideas and thoughts to make 2021 a memorable year for all.

My passion for leadership began a few years ago when I was given the chance to captain my footy team. Since then, I have grown as a leader, being SRC representative for Rice house last year. My TA teacher Liam Downie as well my House Leaders Mr Myers and in particular Mr Edwards encouraged me to give the role a crack. I took their advice and was lucky enough to be

selected as School Captain alongside Maya. My parents were also very supportive of my leadership endeavours, encouraging me to apply.

One of my favourite parts of our college is the tireless efforts that our amazing staff and teachers put into our students, making sure we are getting the best chances and opportunities to learn and thrive.

My favourite memory of Damascus College would have to be our Year 12 retreat this year at Anglesea. I really enjoyed our year level coming together to have a good time before undergoing the year together.

During my spare time, I work part-time at Coles in Sebastopol. I also play tennis at Holioke Park in Ballarat and enter tournaments around Victoria with my mates. I love spending time with my family camping at our farm in Mount Egerton, which we do quite often.

After school, I am looking to study teaching either at ACU in Ballarat or Deakin in Geelong after developing a love for teaching and working with others over the past few years. I am hoping to travel over the next few years both within Australia and overseas, to see what the world has to offer.

To all of the students starting Year 7, my advice is to participate in as many things as possible. The college provides so many opportunities for you to participate in and meet new people. This will make your school life so enjoyable by having fun and feeling involved in the college, making your experience the best possible.

This year I aim to be the best leader possible for the community and to most importantly have fun!

Shaun Leonard, Year 12

DAMASCUS COLLEGE ALUMNI ART PRIZE



**THIS IS YOUR CHANCE
TO EARN \$2000 FOR A PIECE
OF YOUR ARTWORK.**

The Art Prize is open to Damascus College Alumni
(including past students or staff from Sacred Heart College, St Paul's College
and St Martin's in the Pines)

Artwork must explore the College motto 'To Live By the Light of Christ'.

Application deadline: 4pm Monday 31 May, 2021

Details and application form
damascus.vic.edu.au



connecting@Damascus

60 SCHOOLGIRLS LOST IN BUSH

BY JACI WILEY

About 60 teenage schoolgirls were lost in the bush between Cape Otway and Glenaire on Monday night, sparking a search involving police, local residents and teachers.

The girls were found safe and well about 8.30 am yesterday after spending the night camped in ti tree scrub near cliffs along the coast.

They were on an excursion from Sacred Heart College, Ballarat, and under the care and supervision of teachers. The group was not in danger during the incident and were in good spirits when found.

Apollo Bay police Senior Constable Alan Shiels said teachers waiting for the group raised the alarm after the hikers failed to arrive at Glenaire before dark on Monday.

A preliminary search was raised by teachers and local residents but was unsuccessful and police were notified about 1 am.

Police organised a dawn search for the

missing girls and found them at 8.30 am.

Snr-Const Shiels said the tracks in the area used by the group were often confusing and it seemed they had taken a wrong track somewhere along the way, leading them into thick ti tree closer to the coast than they had planned to be.

The group set up camp at dark in sand dunes in a hollow near coastal cliffs.

He said they were fully equipped and the weather had been good so they were in no danger. They were found in good spirits.

College vice-principal, Sister Marie Davey, said the school had been notified of the incident and the principal had gone to the coast to meet with students and teachers.

It was unclear if they would be returning to the school early.

She said the group was well and had been quite safe. They had camped safely overnight and had not been in danger.

The Ballarat Courier, 1988

BLAST FROM THE PAST

DAMASCUS ARCHIVES

Love it or hate it, Year 9 camp is certainly an adventure. While some of our more 'mature' alumni may think that today's Year 9 camp experience is nothing compared to the 10-day test of character that was Year 10 Outward Bound, it remains a challenging and rewarding experience for our students.

Back in 1988, a group of Year 9 students from SHC found themselves the subject of newspaper headlines when they failed to arrive at their camp site on the very first day. The group had been on a seemingly endless hike to the banks of the Aire River and when unable to locate their campsite by nightfall, had decided to down packs and sleep in the scrub.

As luck would have it, the weather was good, so tents were not required - the young women and their accompanying teachers simply dropped their packs, rugged up and attempted to get as good a night's sleep as possible in the circumstances. Unbeknownst to them, the police had been notified and the dawn search was successful with all found safe and well.

Resilience was high amongst the cheerful group, as despite their eventful night under the stars, they were able to continue the camp, coming home at the end of the week with a story for the ages.

I WAS A SACRED HEART BOARDER

ALUMNI STORY

I am Noela Steinfort nee Curran, Class of 1966, and I was a boarder at Sacred Heart College (SHC) in 1965 and 1966. I am from a wheat and sheep farm in Bannerton, a small place in the Mallee; the closest town of any size is Robinvale. I am one of seven children – I have two sisters and four brothers.

I am married and have five children (four sons and one daughter) and nine grandchildren. I was the first in my family to go to university. I am proud of the life I have created with my husband and the opportunities we have been able to give our children.

In 2002, my younger sister, Colleen (who had been a boarder herself at St Martin's in the Pines), and I won a gold medal in tennis doubles at the World Masters Games in Melbourne.

In 2005, I published a book, 'We've Been There! A Journey Through Different Times and Worlds', about the travels of my husband and myself, including living and working with Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta.

Upon reflection, my time at Sacred Heart built on my already well-developed self-confidence. As a boarder, my sense of independence grew, being away from the family home, allowing me to mature. The teaching of the Sisters instilled in me good manners and good grammar. I completed my secondary education at SHC and it opened my eyes to possibilities in life that I hadn't thought possible, up to that time.

I had amazing teachers at SHC including a couple of favourites; Sr Stanislaus, now Sr Anne Forbes and Sr Jane Francis (just a few years older than us at the time!), now Sr Veronica Lawson. They were passionate about the subjects they taught, but they also had the ability to listen and made me feel heard. They made me feel like I could achieve the goals they were setting, and that made me feel confident.

I remember that I particularly enjoyed studying History, Geography and French.

When I think back on my time at SHC I remember the friendships, fun, and what seemed like ridiculous rules. Each of us having to wear hats and gloves whenever we left the school, which wasn't often.



Noela and Marie Curran, 1965



Marie Harrison nee Curran and Noela Steinfort nee Curran, 2017

I remember a tennis event – not sure when, but we won a school team tournament and arrived back at the College feeling pretty pleased with ourselves and ready for congratulations, but Mother Bonaventure spoiled it all by declaring our tennis dresses were too short! She surely popped our bubble!!

As SHC ladies we enjoyed dancing lessons with Mrs Challingsworth, movie afternoons, relaxation time on weekend afternoons, treats like jam fancies and jam roly-polies, sleeping in a dormitory, the meals in the refectory, and the thrill of Sunday afternoon visitors from St Pat's.

Journeying into Ballarat at the start of Form 5 to be a boarder at SHC was a bit daunting, but so many of us were from "the farm" that pretty soon you realised that you were not alone. I was blessed to have my life-long friend and cousin, Marie Harrison nee Curran, at school with me. We grew up across the paddock from each other.

At Sacred Heart I met other great friends such as Tricia van Lint nee O'Donnell, Barbara Ford nee Meich, Helen Morgan, Denise Roache, Anne Tellefson, and Moira Moore nee Matthews.

I think most boarders were part of a big group, especially since we lived together. At that time, 1965 and 1966, the school year had three terms, each about three months long, so we spent a lot of time together. Having said that, there were definitely smaller groups that formed within the larger group

Truly, as I look back now, more than 50 years since I last attended Sacred Heart, it is the friendships, communal living, and being taught by dedicated and independent women that I still treasure.

Noela Steinfort nee Curran, Class of 1966

2021 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

DAMASCUS COLLEGE





2021 SRC PRESIDENT

ZAC MCCARTHY

Hello, my name is Zac McCarthy and I am the President of the 2021 Student Representative Council. I have been a part of the SRC three times throughout my six years at Damascus. One of my favourite things to do is play music – I do so every chance I can get. I have loved getting involved in many activities within the Damascus College music program. I particularly enjoy creating and writing original music, especially if I can collaborate with those around me who have the same passion as me. Outside of school, I have been training and teaching karate at the Ballarat Dojo over the last nine years which is something I am also incredibly passionate about.

I love being a part of the SRC for a number of reasons, the main one being that the people involved are fantastic to be around, bringing such great energy to the community as well as new and exciting perspectives. These are the reasons I wanted to be President of the

SRC, to be able to work in close collaboration with such students in a way that will challenge me by stepping up to a further position of leadership.

In 2021 I am hoping to achieve even more, doing the best I can while still being able to enjoy myself outside of school. This year, as a Year 12 student I am most looking forward to being able to develop a strong bond with the rest of the Year 12 cohort, as well as further developing my skills within music. After secondary school, I would like to take some time to focus on personal development, taking some time to work on my music; writing and producing original content. I would also like to further develop my martial arts career; travelling overseas to immerse myself in the culture to learn their traditions, as well as taking some time to experience living in a new place.

2021 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

POSITION	McAULEY	ST MARTIN	RICE	XAVIER
College Captains			Shaun Leonard	Maya Tolliday
House Captains	Georgia Newman	Kiara Dowie	Grace Byrne	Jessica Blackmore
House Captains	Patrick O'Beirne	Riley McCarthy	Mia Lepair	John Grimaldo
House Captains	Payton Overall	Will Norwood	Angus Shillito	Zac McCarthy
House Captains	Erica Webb	Mia Richardson	Olivia Stevens	Phoebe Shaw
Year 11	Kane Irvin	Sinead Sugars	Charlotte Hayward	Laura Lee
Year 10	Sophie Busutil	Jessica Hodge	Leah Stevens	Jack Coffey
Year 9	Jonah Skewes-Clinton	Brayden Joyce	Emmerson McHenry	Meg Jones
Year 8	Joachim Henderson	Kylan Jans	Kassidy Jewell	Haileigh Buttigieg
Year 7	Harvey Wilson	Archie Staley	Harrison Gradkowski	Olivia Radisich

AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENT

DAMASCUS EVENT

The annual Awards and Achievement evening was very different in 2020 due to COVID and the restrictions on events. So, as a College, we pivoted and produced a video to celebrate this special occasion. The video was broadcast to the student population on Friday 4 December 2020. This event recognised students throughout 2020 who have achieved academic excellence, general endeavour, sporting endeavour and age group champions.

The 2019 College Dux, Imogen Brown, was invited to develop a speech via video to receive the Dr Yvonne Aitken Scholarship sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. Imogen provided a light-hearted address to the audience on what she had been up to in the year since finishing high school.

Throughout the video, House Leaders, Assistant House Leaders and the House student leadership team shared House Team messages of congratulations to all award recipients. It was a wonderful way to involve students and staff in making the video as engaging as possible.

Also acknowledged and celebrated was the 2020 Junior Art Acquisition Award, which went to Sophie Busutil with her piece titled 'Oceanside'. The Senior Art Acquisition was awarded at a later date and went to Charlotte Grimes, Yr 12, for her photography work titled 'The Ineffable'.

The 2020 Special Awards and Scholarships were awarded, and the recipients are listed on the following page.



Imogen Brown



Rice House



Mr Matthew Byrne

2020 SPECIAL AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Award	Name	
Catherine King Community Shield	Matthew Byrne	Staff
Jo Reilly Award	Kylan Jans	Year 7
Social Justice Award - Junior	Sophie Busuttil	Year 9
Social Justice Award - Senior	Hannah Mroczkowski	Year 12
Performing Arts Award - Junior	Declan Eden	Year 8
Performing Arts Award - Senior	Jack Davidson	Year 12
Leadership Award - Junior	Kylan Jans	Year 7
Leadership Award - Senior	Jack Davidson	Year 12
Sports Person of the Year	Alexander Rofe	Year 12
Academic Honours	Grace Young-Harvey	Year 12
Academic Honours	Symantha Sawka	Year 12
Australian Olympic Change-Maker Award	Imogen Batrouney	Year 12
Bill O'Loughlin English Endeavour Award	Imogen Thorne	Year 11
Bill O'Loughlin English Endeavour Award	Molly Jessup	Year 11
Damascus College Academic Endeavour and Excellence Scholarship	Patrick O'Beirne	Year 11
Damascus College Sporting Endeavour and Excellence Scholarship	Olivia Daly	Year 10
Damascus College Arts Endeavour and Excellence Scholarship	Elarin Johnson	Year 9
Sisters of Mercy Dorothy Griffin Scholarship	Isla Casey	10
Sisters of Mercy Dorothy Griffin Scholarship	Mikayla Montgomery	10
Dorothy Irene-Ellis Thomas Scholarship	Hannah Mroczkowski	12
Dorothy Irene-Ellis Thomas Scholarship	Jack Davidson	12
Diocese of Ballarat Scholarship	Sinead Sugars	10
Dr Yvonne Aitken Scholarship	Imogen Brown	Dux 2019



2021

DEBUT NOVEL 'JOURNEY ADVENIA'

ALUMNI STORY

Hello readers of *The Road*. I am Aiden Kinder, a graduate of Damascus College from the Class of 2017.

In November 2018, I opened a word document and began writing a story that would later become my very first novel; *Journey Advenia*. At the time, it didn't have a title and it was very different to the book that's up for sale today. The story, and myself for that matter, went on a long road to get to where it is today.

Journey Advenia is about three unlikely companions who go on a journey across a vast fantasy world. A young monk, Kiro, bands together with Viella Vanclaude, a fugitive swordswoman, and Synn, a legendary bounty hunter, on a daring adventure across the wondrous, treacherous land of Advenia.

I mentioned before that I started writing this in 2018, a full year after I had graduated high school, but this is a story that has existed in my brain since Year 9. At that time, it was only patches of events and vague, foggy imaginations of the world and the three main characters. Some characters and places, like Ms Egree and the Twisted Seas, have floated around in my brain for years. Other aspects, like Kiro and Viella's names, came about well after I had finished the first draft. I was inspired by the classic "quest" stories,

where characters travel through great, wondrous lands to complete their goals. If I had to name a title as the biggest inspiration, I would say the movie 'The Princess Bride'. It's a story with soul – memorable characters, charming wit, and an air of fun and optimism that makes it such a unique, lovable story. I wanted to write a story that was proud of simply being a story – something you could enjoy losing yourself in for a time, before putting it down and leaving it feeling good about life.

Before opening the word document that would later be Draft One, I had made countless attempts to start writing the book. I never got past Chapter One. I was impatient, and when I compared myself against a phantom standard of my competitors, I would be disheartened and quick to give up.

But even after finishing the first draft, the journey had only just begun. I revised and rewrote five more drafts, then paid for a manuscript assessment, which gave me much needed clarity and understanding of where to go next. I wrote eight more drafts and a few different versions until I finally got to the finished product.

It's wonderful and fulfilling to have finally done this. I have wanted to write a book since I was in Grade 3. But even back then, I



2017

thought it was unrealistic. I never believed that I could do it, or that I could be successful. I never considered that I could really be an author because success seemed next to impossible. But the truth I realised was this; success in any pursuit is the result of hard work and good luck. No matter what career I pursued, I'd have to work hard to make it, and the moment I realised that life would be hard no matter what I did, I decided that if I was going to work hard and take risks, I wanted to do it for something I believed in, something I wanted to do.

While it is exciting and fulfilling to finally publish this story, it is also nerve-racking. Publishing a book means opening yourself up and being vulnerable to the world. Not just in receiving criticism, but because writing is inevitably a very personal process. A book tells you a lot about its author. Many of my thoughts, feelings and experiences seep through the words of the story, and publishing it is almost scary. But I'm prepared for it. And Damascus College certainly deserves some of the credit for that.

In school, I was a passionate drama student, and my time in the auditorium helped shape me into the person I am today. To get on stage and perform, you need to be vulnerable, and my time in drama as a student of Andrew Seear has helped make me

a bolder person. English was also invaluable for understanding themes and symbolism in literature, and how I could apply this in my own work; I want to thank Michael Bennett for pushing me to work hard in that subject. Analysing and dissecting the inner workings of the texts we studied was extremely useful for me as an author, and I used some of the techniques I learned from school in my own novel.

I look back on my time at Damascus fondly, especially in my last year. I was very fortunate to have good friends, peers and teachers around me. It is hard to articulate precisely how my experiences at Damascus influenced my novel, but I can safely say that I learned a lot from my time at school that would inform the perspectives and ideologies that contend in the subtext of *Journey Advenia*. Not to mention, some of the inspiration I received from the people I knew and the wisdom I learned from them.

And now, finally, the book is here. It is my hope, should you choose to read it, that you will enjoy it.

The book is available for purchase on Amazon and my website, www.aidenkinder.com

Aiden Kinder, Class of 2017

STAY CONNECTED KEEP INFORMED

Together, we celebrate our proud history and recognise and celebrate our foundation schools; Sacred Heart College, St Paul's Technical College, and St Martin's in the Pines. Past students and staff of these foundation Colleges and Damascus College form our alumni.

Our website has been updated with a great new look and feel. Visit damascus.vic.edu.au to learn the latest information regarding Alumni Events and Class Reunions. Update your details to stay connected.

You're Invited

2021 CLASS REUNION DATES

Book your tickets now...

50 Year	Class of 1971	Sunday 15 August, 2021
40 Year	Class of 1981	Saturday 31 July, 2021
30 Year	Class of 1991	Saturday 7 August, 2021
20 Year	Class of 2001	Sunday 8 August, 2021
10 Year	Class of 2011	Friday 30 July, 2021

Full details and get your tickets at damascus.vic.edu.au



connecting@Damascus



MY PERSONAL STRUGGLES

KIARA DOWIE

Year 12 student Kiara Dowie is looking forward to finishing her final year of schooling before she plans to embark on some overseas travel next year.

This positive attitude is a work in progress for Kiara, as she is working her way through the ongoing challenge she faces in dealing with anxiety and feelings of depression.

Kiara is the youngest of three siblings; she has two older brothers, Jarrin and Connor, and her family is originally from Colac.

"I have suffered from anxiety from an early age, and feelings of depression started to become a problem over the last year due to the pandemic. Not seeing my friends and losing my routine all contributed to these emotions and I lost the motivation to get up in the mornings," she said.

"Anxiety impacted my motivation and ability to complete work, so my schoolwork often went uncompleted."

"I felt lonely and worthless."

"I was very critical of my results and never thought they were high enough, which led to me being self-conscious of my schoolwork and I then felt disappointment in the results, no matter how hard I tried."

Kiara's family and friends have been a constant source of support and she acknowledges the support over the last six years from her House Leader and Teacher Adviser.

"Their support and care helped me feel a part of a family here at school, where I am accepted and supported to do my best in anything I try."

Kiara likes to keep active; she participates in CrossFit, netball and football, which for her, is one of the most effective ways to relieve stress and anxiety and is great in clearing her mind when she overthinks and dwells on things.

Nowadays, Kiara is still working at overcoming her anxiety with the help of her local GP and counsellors.

"Over the years, I have gained many strategies that allow me to feel more relaxed. For example, I list three things I can feel, see and smell, as using my senses helps me stay focused and be more present in the moment."

"Anxiety is a normal feeling that students can suffer from, whether it comes from within school or outside school, it is nothing to be ashamed of. I have learnt to be comfortable talking about my mental health struggles, as I hope that it may inspire someone to seek help or help to remove the stigma around it," she said.

"All you can do is your best, if you try your hardest then the results won't matter. Talk to your teacher if you are struggling and organise a time when you can catch up. Make sure you communicate with your friends and surround yourself with people that make you happy and make you a better person."





YEAR 7 CAMP

DAMASCUS EVENT

The coronavirus crisis has caused great concern for many over the past 12 months. Due to a snap five-day lockdown in early 2021, once again, the College had to find a way to allow our new Year 7 students the opportunity to experience some elements of what their Year 7 camp would have had in store for them.

With some quick thinking and planning by the camp proprietors and staff members, Brendan and Ann Bawden, students attended 'Log Cabin Camp, Creswick' with anticipation and excitement of a one-day experience, instead of the usual overnight camp. Even though this was a shortened experience for students, this camp is all about students getting to know all members of their House, as we prefer to call this a 'House Immersion' opportunity.

It was a 'jam-packed' day of canoeing, 'zip line', 'leap of faith' and 'crate stacking', as well as a shared House lunch. During these activities, their House teachers and leaders were there to talk to them, laugh with them and encourage them.

As a result, students and staff immersed themselves in having fun and getting to know each other. The weather was perfect and the outcome was a great success. So, even though it was an abridged version of past years, students appreciated this opportunity to make new friends and hopefully form lifelong relationships with their peers and teachers.





VIOLIN IS MY PASSION

WILLIAM DEANS

I was born in Ballarat and raised in Mount Helen since I was six months old.

I live with my parents and younger brother Thomas, who also attends Damascus. I live across the road from my Grandparents. I think we are a close family in more ways than one.

I was two years old when I asked my Mum if I could play the violin. Since the age of two, I have always had a strong passion to play violin and I was lucky at the age of four to be directed to my music teacher, Sarah Walters, who has helped me develop my violin skills.

When I was studying Year 9 I played in the band for the College Production. During the production, I met Yvonne Holly and was encouraged to join the string ensemble. Being a member of the ensemble has provided me with opportunities to play with other students who also have a passion for playing music.

“Playing with others is my favourite part of being in the ensemble.”

When I play the violin, I tend to forget about any other stress or concerns. I enjoy the sound the violin makes; I enjoy the challenge of playing a technical instrument and the satisfaction of being able to play complex pieces of music.

The string ensemble also provides a relaxed environment where you are supported to play together, no matter your ability. I play football and cricket and can say that being a part of the ensemble feels similar to being part of a sporting team as we all look out for each other and support each other.

I do not tend to get nervous when the ensemble is asked to play at large school events which might be because I have performed at concerts during my musical studies. I enjoy playing at school events and always have a sense of pride in everyone's performance.

For me, playing an instrument has been a huge part of my life. I put a lot of time into practising and developing my skills; although its time consuming, I find it very rewarding. Studying music helps me in other aspects of my studies as music requires me to understand complex problems and gives me confidence that I can achieve good outcomes with hard work. I would recommended studying a musical instrument to anyone who has the time to practice.

What I enjoy most about Damascus College is the support and encouragement from friends and College staff to be your best. My favourite subjects over the years have been Physical Education and Music, both of which I have studied as part of my VCE.

When I finish at Damascus, I hope to do some further study in the health sciences or enter into a career that involves working in the health industry. My dream career would be working for the Hawthorn Football Club (in any role).

My advice for new students to Damascus would be to explore the different groups offered through the schools' extra-curricular programs. Join groups, make friends and enjoy your time at school; it doesn't all have to be hard work.

William Deans, Year 12





2021 ALUMNI ART PRIZE

DR MARIA STRATFORD

The Alumni Art Prize seeks to engage Damascus College alumni in the life and community of Damascus by producing a piece of art that explores our motto 'To Live By The Light Of Christ'.

Launched in 2014, each year, the College has engaged the services of an alumnus to create a piece of artwork for Damascus.

The Damascus College Alumni Art Prize offers great exposure for the artist. The 2021 artist commissioned is Dr Maria Stratford, Class of 1974, who produced a photograph on archival paper.

2021 ARTIST STATEMENT

On hearing the statement, 'To Live By The Light Of Christ', my mind returns to many places and experiences in my life.

One of my most memorable experiences of religious faith and devotion was in Ethiopia, especially in the ancient town of Lalibela where this image was taken. Unlike my previous experiences of religious communities, where the priests have comfortable lives and elaborate priestly attire, the life of this priest is more in tune with the life of Christ; one of hardship and modesty which is reflected by the clothes he wears and the humility conveyed by his facial expression. He is quite isolated from the rest of the churches, the rest of the religious community and broader society due to the remoteness of his church.

To reach this tiny, modest church, one has to climb Abuna Yoseph Mountain, which is 4,260 metres high. The church is carved into the rock face and is one of the highest churches in Ethiopia. The priest is holding an ancient Bible which shows the black Madonna and

Child. The similarity between the facial features of the priest and the Madonna are striking and very typical of the people of Northern Ethiopia. This demonstrates the long-standing practice in different societies around the world who create images of Christ and Mary in their own likeness to help their community identify with their religion.

The text in the Bible is written in a 2,000-year-old language called Ge'ez, which is unknown to the average Ethiopian but used by the Ethiopian Orthodox priests to this day. The monks, priests and nuns of Ethiopia, on the whole, live very modest lives and truly live by the Light of Christ. In Lalibela, I visited the nuns' living quarters, which were tiny dirt caves carved out of the rock face. There was no light and only room to enter by stooping. Life for the average person in Lalibela is comfortable and so this, to me, demonstrates that the nuns and priests have a strong devotion to their religion and live in a manner that reflects this devotion.

For 12 years I was taught by nuns, and religion formed a large part of their teachings. The stories from the Bible and the words of Christ documented therein are teachings and behaviours that I have tried to live my life by, not in a religious way but in a humanistic way, showing humility, comfort, love and empathy for people in my life and others I can help and give succour to, both here and overseas. This, to me, is a personal demonstration of living by the Light of Christ.

Dr Maria Stratford, Class of 1974





NEXT GEN EXHIBITION

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

The 2021 Next Gen exhibition showcases the creative endeavours from government, Catholic and Independent schools in Ballarat and the broader region in VCE Art, Studio Arts, Design and Technology, Visual Communication and Design and Media. While 2020 was a very difficult one for students, they continued to work and create, and this Next Gen exhibition debatably includes work that challenges the standard of previous years.

Congratulations to the students representing Damascus College. Our talented participants from the Class of 2020 include Sofie Sawka (who created an entire graphic novel from scratch), Kiara Powers and her eerie, perfectly processed photo of an abandoned house, and Charlotte Grimes with her photographic series capturing the new reality experienced living in 'shut down' during the pandemic.

Studio Arts Photography student Charlotte Grimes was also the winner of the innovation award at the New Gen opening. In addition to this, her work titled 'The Ineffable' was selected from over 3000 applicants to be exhibited at TOP ART at the National Gallery of Victoria.

Well done to Sofie, Kiara and Charlotte in gaining this significant acknowledgement for your creative work.

All entries can be seen online at: https://artgalleryofballarat.com.au/gallery_exhibitions/nextgen-2021/



Pictured:

1. Charlotte Grimes with her photographic series 'The Ineffable'.
2. Kiara Powers photographic piece 'Bute Hill'.
3. Sofie Sawka with her graphic novel 'Holimion & Kotone: An Anthology of short stories'.

THE HERITAGE ARTIST

ALUMNI STORY

I was born and bred in Ballarat and attended Damascus College from 2000 to 2005. I have fond memories of painting and drawing in the art room at the Mount Clear campus under the fine tutelage of Sharen Wolfe.

All of my siblings have gone to Damascus: Adam went from 1998 to 2003; Ned attended from 2008 to 2013; Brandon is currently in Year 9 and Abbey is in Year 11.

I initially wanted to study medicine after graduating in 2005 but did not get in, so I moved to Melbourne and completed a Bachelor of Biomedical Sciences at Monash University. I persisted and the hard work paid off when I got accepted into Medicine at Deakin University.

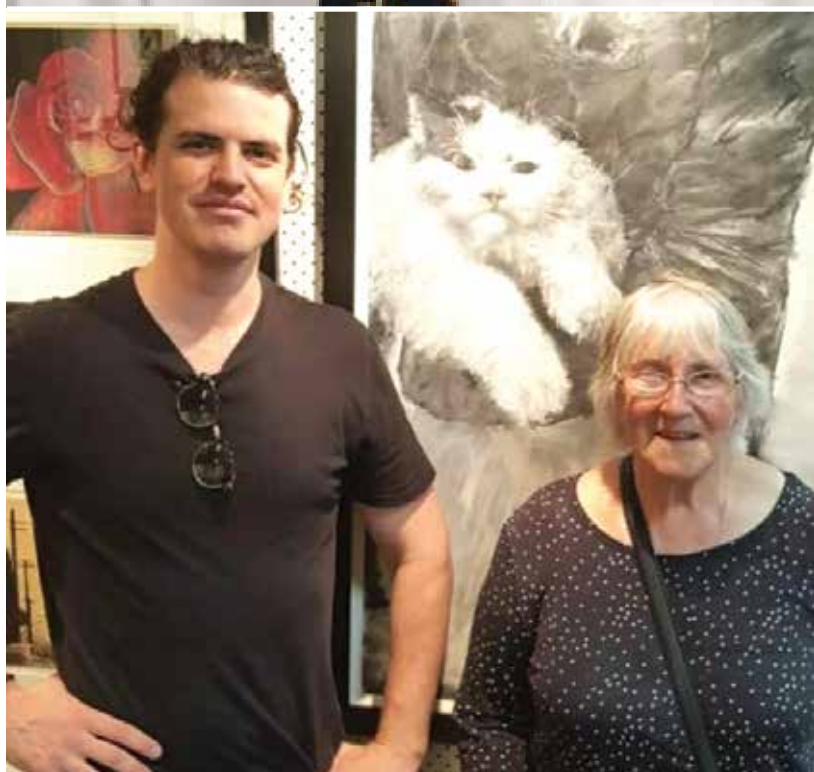
After graduating in 2012, I returned to Ballarat and completed my internship at Ballarat Health Services in 2013. I was interested in surgery and completed an Advanced Diploma in Surgical Anatomy, which ironically, has allowed me to draw and paint the structure of the human body more easily.

I soon realised that surgery was not for me and I moved to Sydney for a sea change. I decided to pursue psychiatry and got accepted into the Psychiatry training program; I started working as a psychiatry registrar across hospitals in the city, including the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, where I completed a Masters of Medicine (Psychiatry).

Over the years, my passion for art never really left, but for some reason, I started to paint and draw more and more during my psychiatry training. I ended up holding a solo exhibition in Glebe, a suburb of Sydney, in 2018. The exhibition went quite well and it gave me the confidence to pursue art more seriously.

I then decided to enrol at the Julian Ashton Art School and attended evening classes after work. It got to the point where I tried to go to art classes every night after work and on the weekends, I loved it so much! Julian Ashton specialises in classical drawing and painting techniques, something that I particularly enjoy and wanted to nurture in my own work.

After thinking over it for a significant amount of time, I decided to take a break from doctoring to attend art school full-time. It was an amazing experience, but after 8 months, the COVID-19 pandemic reared its ugly head, shutting down the art school. It left me a little demoralised and unsure of my next step, so I decided to work as a





ogen Brown

But as one door closed, another appeared to open. While I was working at the Mater Hospital in Newcastle, I became acquainted with Pablo Tapia, a master artist who specialises in the Flemish Method and tonal impressionism. Pablo also has a keen art and business sense and gave me the confidence to try and take my art to the next level, which leads me to now.

Julian Ashton remained closed, so I decided to return home and start up an online art business. I love history too, and I'm the annoying person who loves to read the plaques on buildings and statues. I also love how the landscape has changed over the years and comparing how things used to look.

I branded myself as 'The Heritage Artist' and my website is www.theheritageartist.com.au

I paint and draw old buildings, people and places, and then write articles about them. Since launching the site in February this year, I've been lucky enough to interview Carla Preston, a beautician in Creswick who runs 'The Beauty In The Box Co.' salon and painted her building. I interviewed members of the Ararat Railway Museum and will be painting an old Ararat steam train. I will also soon be interviewing two-time Stawell gift winner and the fastest sprinter on Australian soil, Josh 'The Boss' Ross, and drawing his portrait.

It has been a great ride, but it all started at Damascus College. I thank Sharen Wolfe for nurturing my passion for art and introducing me to the Heidelberg School and French Impressionism.

Damian Talbot, Class of 2005.



Pictured: Opposite Page. Top - Damian 2005, Bottom - Damian with Valerie Dunstan (Nanna) 2020. This Page. Top Damian 2020, Bottom - Ballarat East Fire Station, 2017.





2020/2021 ROWING SEASON REVIEW

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

The 2021 rowing season was a fantastic success for Damascus College. We saw our recruitment jump from 45 to 73, we added two brand-new Sykes racing boats to our fleet, we returned to racing in the open division one event at Head of the Lake, and we performed better than the previous season across the whole season!

Damascus College Rowing 2021 comprised of:

- Four junior girls crews
- Two junior boys crews
- Three intermediate girls crews
- Two intermediate boys crews
- One intermediate boys double scull
- Two senior girls crews
- One senior boys crew
- One senior single sculler
- Six junior coaches
- Five intermediate coaches
- Three senior coaches

After completing our pre-season training in lockdown of Term 3 2020, the rowing squad took to the water with great enthusiasm, excited to be back out on Lake Wendouree doing what we love!

Damascus competed in several pre-season regattas before taking a break over the summer holidays, the highlight being the inaugural Ballarat Omnium, where crews raced various distances as they completed a lap of the lake.

The seniors travelled to Nagambie for their training camp while the junior and intermediate squads stayed in Ballarat. Both training camps were a success, with all crews coming out of training camp and performing well at regattas. A big thank you to Shaun O'Loughlin for organising the bowls day for the junior and intermediate crews.

Of particular note is Angus Shillito, who won the Schoolboy Single Scull event at both the Wendouree-Ballarat Regatta and the Nagambie Regatta.

This year's Head of the Lake saw the first-ever inclusion of sculling in our regatta. The junior squad competed in quad sculls, and a single- and double-scull combined event was included for seniors. All Damascus College crews performed well and executed their skills flawlessly. We had 73 students compete, compared to the 45 who competed at the previous event – a fantastic achievement for our recruitment and retention programs.



There were two further major regattas for the season, Head of the Schoolgirls and the Australian Rowing Championships.

After the unfortunate cancellation of the 2020 Head of the Schoolgirls, it was great to have our girls again competing on the Barwon River in the biggest girl's regatta in Australia. All crews had fantastic rows, with each crew achieving a personal best over the weekend. A special mention to Georgia Peart, who went from coxing the senior boys at Head of the Lake two weeks prior, to racing the single scull at Head of the Schoolgirls! Well done, Georgia!

Damascus College Rowing supplied one rower, Alex Western, for Wendouree-Ballarat Rowing Club's Australian Rowing Championships team. Alex competed in the Under 17s Coxed Quad Sculls event held at Lake Barrington in Tasmania. Alex's crew performed very well, placing 4th in the heat, heading straight to semi-finals and avoiding the repechage. In the semi-final, Alex's crew rowed well but were unfortunately eliminated. Well done to Alex on a fantastic effort!

The momentum we are building now will continue into the 2022 rowing season, with exciting new opportunities for all rowers of all age groups. I believe we are building something very special here and I'm excited to see where this journey takes us.

Paul Blanchfield, Rowing Logistics & Technical Support Coordinator

2021 ROWING AWARD WINNERS:

Junior Girls

Winner: Paris Govan

Runner Up: Tara Orchard

Junior Boys Winner:

Harrison Kennett

Runner Up: Charlie McCann

Intermediate Girls

Winner: Daisy Simpson-Kerr

Runner Up: Jessica McKay

Intermediate Boys

Winner: Ryder Lavery

Runner Up: Alex Western

Senior Girls

Winner: Jessica Blackmore

Runner Up: Matilda Flood

Senior Boys

Winner: Thomas McKay

Runner Up: Lucas Edmonds

Coxing Award

Winner: Alice Lepair

Runner Up: Laura Bylsma

Coaches Award

Winner: Brad Beutel

Morongo Medalist

Winner: Olivia Reyjntes

Winner: Jessica Blackmore



RIDE 4 RESCUE

ELI SMART

In March 2021, Year 9 student Eli Smart took part in a special bike ride called Ride 4 Rescue (R4R) to raise funds for a very important project, the Blossom Project in Vanuatu.

Eli said the Blossom Project educates young people on reproductive health and empowers young girls to know their rights.

“It seeks to prevent unwanted pregnancies amongst teens in Vanuatu and provides support and care for those girls who find themselves with an unwanted pregnancy,” Eli said.

Eli’s aunt Louise Ginn is the founder of the project, which came about when she heard of the tragic story of a newborn baby being found abandoned in a bush toilet in Vanuatu. She instantly knew she had to do something.

“I don’t think any mother should feel they need to abandon their child, but there are women in Vanuatu that feel they have no other option,” said Louise.

Louise’s neighbour knew people in Vanuatu, so Louise contacted them and started the Blossom Project.

Eli got involved as he and his mother, Sophie, wanted to support the wonderful work Louise was doing in Vanuatu, as she was making a real difference in people’s lives.

“We raised more than \$3,000 and I worked endless hours selling chocolates to raise the funds, as I knew it was for a worthy cause,” Eli said.

They travelled to Canberra in March to take part in the charity mountain bike ride from Canberra to the top of Mount Kosciuszko.

“We rode over 300 kilometres in four days through some of the most scenic terrains in the Australian High Country,” said Eli.

“It was amazing. Mum and I had heaps of fun, and although we encountered a few challenges along the way, it is something I will remember for a lifetime.

“Everyone was so friendly, and we always had a smile on our face, and one of the best parts was the bus ride as we met so many amazing people that will be friends forever.”

Eli is now looking forward to next year’s R4R event, where they hope to take part as a member of the ‘guns’ and challenge themselves to ride 100km a day. They are also keen to raise an extra \$1,000 for Restore One, the other project that Louise’s best friend founded.

Restore One is a charity to break poverty one community at a time in Cambodia, through housing, education, employment and health initiatives. The funds help to provide high school education for teenage girls and boys, more specifically to pay the teachers.

“We can’t wait for next year and we are very happy to learn that the money we raised will be used for supporting young girls with the knowledge of sexual health, bringing in trained teachers to provide the proper support and understanding the girls needs,” Eli said.

“I love riding, and this charity ride was honestly the best experience I’ve ever been a part of. The comradery and constant support of the group was amazing, and it energised me to keep going to reach our goal.”

Eli Smart, Year 9

Our Alumni are the wind beneath our wings.
You have the power to **inspire**, **electrify**
and **motivate** our students.
Please, help them **soar**.



SHINING LIGHT AWARD FOR INSPIRING ALUMNI

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

Please help inspire our current and future students.
Nominate a Shining Light. Full details and form can be found at
damascus.vic.edu.au/community/alumni/shining-light-award



Judy Brewer and late husband Tim Fischer

BLOOM WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED

SHINING LIGHT AWARD

The Venerable Catherine McAuley once said that “we should be shining lamps giving light to all around us”. To showcase the motivational and inspirational students of Damascus and our foundation colleges the College launched the Shining Light Award for Inspiring Alumni.

One of the inaugural inductees of the award is Judy Brewer, Order of Australia. Judy, from the Class of 1979, receives her award for her Service to the Global Community.

Judy has been Chair of the Autism CRC since its inception in 2013. She is a nationally recognised speaker and writer on issues relating to neurodiverse families. With two adult sons, one of whom is autistic, Judy has been actively involved in many autism and carer organisations and is a life member of Autism Spectrum Australia, convener of the Autism Future Leaders program and founder of Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia.

In 2013, Judy was a recipient of the Asia Pacific Autism Award and, in 2016, was named Officer of the Order of Australia for her service to people with a disability, particularly to those on the autism spectrum, refugees living in rural areas, women and education. In 2017, she became Pro-Chancellor of Charles Sturt University.

Judy has held various appointments on Federal and State Government Committees, including as Chair of the National Family Carers Voice, panel member for the 2004 Review of the Disability Carer Allowance, the 2005 Ministerial Advisory Group on the reforms to Disability Trusts, the Victorian Government Autism State Plan Working Party 2007/08 and the DEEWR Advisory Committee for the Positive Partnerships program.

Before this, Judy worked in tertiary education and political research for many years with both State and Federal Parliamentarians. She has been a Board member or Chair of numerous organisations, including philanthropic foundations. Judy lives on a farm in north east Victoria and is the owner/manager of Grossotto Poll Herefords.

Judy’s motto of “Bloom where you are planted” comes to life when you look at what she has been involved with to help others in her community.

Judy has made a difference in so many areas and she has led the way for so many without a voice. She has indeed “shone the light of Christ”.

Shining Light Award Nominations NOW OPEN

Damascus College and its foundation colleges, Sacred Heart, St Paul’s and St Martin’s in the Pines value the contributions and achievements of all its alumni. The Shining Light Award for Inspiring Alumni will be bestowed upon two alumni biennially to recognise alumni who have contributed significantly through their chosen field to Damascus College and our global community, and who will be an inspiration to current and future students.

Nominations close Friday 28 May, 2021 at 4pm.

Please help inspire our current and future students. Nominate a Shining Light. Full details and form can be found at damascus.vic.edu.au/community/alumni/shining-light-award



Jack Davidson



Charlotte and father Luke Grimes



Elyssa Wiffen



"Solace" by Charlotte Grimes



"Reverie" by Charlotte Grimes



Patrick Western

2020 VCE SEASON OF EXCELLENCE

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

Four Damascus College students received the honour of being invited to showcase their work at the 2020 VCE Season of Excellence, presented by the VCAA.

Year 12 2020 students Jack Davidson and Patrick Western were asked to audition for Top Acts, where they performed their drama solo performances in Melbourne.

Jack was also lucky enough to be accepted into Top Designs for his podcast piece, which was on display at the Melbourne Museum.

"It is an exciting opportunity and I enjoyed checking out the fellow exhibitors' work and possibly inspire VCE Media and Arts students to create a podcast or audio product," said Jack.

Patrick said that at first, he was shocked to hear he was invited to audition for Top Acts. "This shock was soon overshadowed by excitement and joy to be able to share a piece of what I have created throughout remote learning with next year's cohort," said Patrick.

Year 12 2020 student Elyssa Wiffen was also successful in being invited to perform her VET contemporary solo dance at the Top Class Dance concerts at the Melbourne Recital Centre.

Elyssa has been dancing since she was aged three and is currently teaching junior Ballet and Jazz (ages 2-6) at her dance school, Kerry Moore School of Ballet. Elyssa is also doing her Bachelor's degree in Nutrition Science at Deakin University.

Year 11 2020 student Charlotte Grimes was also successful in having her Studio Arts photographic artwork accepted into Top Arts, and her work was featured in the exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria in March. This exhibition showcased the best artwork from the state selected by the VCAA.

Charlotte said that in Year 10 her class visited the Top Arts exhibition, and it ignited a passion in her; she soon realised that she wanted to work towards her work being celebrated in this way.

"It feels awesome to be able to achieve this two-year dream," said Charlotte.

Damascus College Principal, Mr Matthew Byrne said that it is a wonderful accomplishment for these students, especially in a year that has been so challenging with remote learning due to COVID-19.

"Jack, Patrick, Elyssa and Charlotte are exceptional young people with significant gifts and talents that have been nurtured and challenged throughout their time at Damascus. It is wonderful to see that they are being appropriately acknowledged state-wide for their creativity and passion," said Mr Byrne.

"This acknowledgement also pays tribute to the hard work and dedication of our Arts and Performing Arts learning areas, in achieving such sustained success amid the challenges of running practical subjects throughout remote learning."

The VCE Season of Excellence is a five-month annual festival showcasing the work of outstanding senior secondary students from Victorian schools in the fields of design, technology, research, multimedia and visual arts. Their work is presented in Melbourne's major cultural venues from February to June.

"I am very proud of these accomplishments and it really has been the 'cherry on top' for finishing my time at Damascus and VCE," said Jack.





CLASS OF 1970 REUNION

ALUMNI EVENT

On Sunday morning 14 March, Damascus College warmly welcomed back almost 50 students and staff from the Class of 1970, as they were finally able to come together to celebrate their 50 (plus 1)-year reunion. Members of this class group had been hoping to celebrate together in April 2020 but were stoic when the event was delayed due to COVID restrictions and guidelines. Some members of this cohort still found that they were unable to attend because of travel restrictions and challenges but are looking forward to the next get together.

As Damascus College is proudly celebrating 140 Years of Catholic Education this year, it was a pleasure to have in attendance Sisters of Mercy Veronica, Therese, Marie and Geraldine. All four have very strong ties with our school in various roles including past students, teachers and leaders. This event was a fitting reminder that together, we celebrate our proud history and recognise and celebrate our foundation schools, Sacred Heart College, St Paul's Technical College and St Martin's in the Pines.

Guests delighted in reconnecting with old friends as they enjoyed the wonderful new gathering space in the Damascus Events Centre. Deputy Principal Chris Grant was on hand to welcome alumni and guests before they enjoyed a delicious lunch and school tour. Sarah

Boswell, Leader of Marketing & Development for the College, attended and spoke about the importance of giving and the Bright Futures Scholarship.

Past student Mary Tehan spoke of the enduring benefit of the education that she and her fellow classmates received at Sacred Heart and St Martin's in the Pines. That for many of the borders, it was really a "home away from home" and that life-long friendships were formed. Mary, on behalf of those in attendance, thanked the Mercy Sisters for the quality of their education and for the respect, love and kindness that they received as students.

Sr Veronica addressed those gathered, thanked them for the impressive and spirited students they were, and commended them for the lives they had lived so far. She shared with the group her ongoing commitment and connection to Damascus, that she had recently attended three events in the past two weeks and was comforted by the calibre of students enrolled.

At the end of the event, the cohort from the Class of 1970 was treated to a tour of the campus so that they could see that while the "bones" of the original buildings remain, a dynamic and modern learning institution has grown.





SELECTED TO PERFORM BALLET INTERSTATE

IMOGEN KORS

Damascus College Year 10 student Imogen Kors is making her dreams of becoming a professional ballet performer a reality after being successfully selected into the prestigious Brisbane City Youth Ballet to perform in their production of 'Alice in Wonderland'.

Imogen was one of 13 advanced dancers in a cast of 60 who were selected from across Australia to perform in the production. In an industry just as affected by COVID-19 as the rest, Imogen's audition was presented via video submission. Imogen is grateful for the support from her local ballet school, the Academy of Classical Ballet and Sovereign Calisthenics College in Ballarat.

Imogen said that these types of opportunities are the dreams of most ballet performers and dancers.

"Performing for a company is something you aspire to. It's the feeling of being free on stage and being able to let go that makes it so enjoyable," said Imogen.

Imogen said the effects of COVID-19 on live performances continued through to her rehearsals, which were directly affected by the Brisbane lockdown on January 8 this year – the day of her first rehearsal.

Despite the challenges, Imogen proceeded to perform in 'Alice in Wonderland' over three days with up to four shows per day at the Brisbane Powerhouse Theatre. This was following 10 rehearsals in the days prior. Imogen said she was used to this workload, having participated in ballet from a young age.

"I have been doing ballet since I was three years old," she said.

"Nearly every night after school I do either ballet, contemporary or calisthenics."

Imogen said she has balanced her education and dancing through studying during breaks at ballet, with her favourite subject at Damascus College being Mathematics.

"I know it seems odd because maths doesn't really go with dancing, but I just like the structure of it," she said.

When asked for a final piece of advice for someone wanting to pursue ballet, Imogen noted the importance of performing because you enjoy it.

"Do what you love, no matter what anyone else says," she said.



Mozambique and Tanzania on the Rovuma River, an elephant migration area

TWO VALUABLE LESSONS

ALUMNI STORY

My name is Regina Molloy, Class of 1990, and I attended Sacred Heart College (SHC) and St Martins in the Pines, referred to as 'St Micks in the Sticks'. It feels like yesterday that I was at high school. The years have flown by so quickly. I am now 48 years old and have lived a privileged and wonderfully adventurous life; I've travelled the world working and have now spent more of my career working outside of Australia than within. I live in Johannesburg, South Africa, and operate my own international mineral exploration consultancy.

I was one of seven children growing up in the small town of Skipton near Ballarat, where my farm life taught me the swagger that comes from committed hard work and an entrepreneurial spirit. I spent my teens dreaming about the adventure of travel; I loved reading and learning about other countries, their cultures, what they ate and what they wore; it was a natural fascination for me. At this time, I had no idea of where I would end up later in life, I just wanted to travel outside of Ballarat and Victoria and see something new, I never realised I was an explorer at heart.

My Catholic education taught me two valuable lessons. I have carried these lessons unknowingly for most of my life. The first being the Golden Rule defined by "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" Luke 6:31 and Mathew 7:12. The second is to act with honesty towards yourself and others, even when no one is looking. Both these values were reinforced to us at school and in my home life, and I've only realised later in life how these values helped me prosper financially and have kept me safe in dangerous places that I have travelled and worked.

After Year 12, I attended Ballarat University College and graduated with a Bachelor of Applied Science, double major in Geology; I was 20 years old when I finished my honours thesis. My first job was in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, where I worked underground in a gold mine. Back then, few women worked underground; however, my adventurous spirit was easily adaptable, so I found it more exciting than dangerous.

At age 25, my yearning to work overseas landed me in Chile, during the Pinochet rule, which was a serious military regime, quite different to the Australian lifestyle where you don't see military arms in public spaces. I worked in Chile and Argentina and I couldn't believe I was paid to walk up 6,000m mountains doing geology scouting work at high altitude; I probably would have done it for free, I enjoyed it so much. I travelled to Peru where local militants and conflict zones were overcome by Peru's military regime; I climbed mountains in Peru and had a wonderful time.

Fast forward to today, 2021, and I have worked as a geologist for 26 years in lots of different countries around the world in search of finding mines with the ultimate objective to benefit society. I have worked in rural areas with diverse cultures including Australia, Chile, Argentina, USA, Liberia, Guinea, Gabon, Tanzania, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria and Zambia. I have studied rocks in search of mines for gold, copper, uranium, iron ore, coal, potash, lead and zinc, cobalt and graphite.

Getting back to my educational values, and lesson number one "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you", this value stood by me in times where I was in the thick of business negotiation



in foreign countries with unfamiliar cultures, particularly during dignitary and tribal negotiations, as their negotiation terms are generally not commercially mainstream. When I applied the Golden Rule during these negotiations, by treating the dignitary leaders as I would towards myself, I was always able to negotiate my way through to achieve the goals set out, and not once have I experienced opposition from a tribal Elder or King, Mayor or Minister of Government. I always negotiate from a position of respect and it has paid off well in all my projects and business relationships.

My personal values to ensure those around me are treated as I would treat myself kept me and my team safe when I worked in post-war Liberia, a country where every piece of infrastructure was destroyed in a brutal war. There were no road bridges left standing in the entire country as all had been blown up during the war. People's houses showed the scars of bullet holes in the conflict areas. I hired local community groups as our security and treated people as I would want to be treated given the tragic circumstances they had endured and lived through; emotional scars were evident everywhere, including the workforce we employed in our mineral exploration program.

For those students at Damascus today, I recommend taking note of the Golden Rule; it challenges you to put others on equal footing as yourself and to think for the collective benefit of all around you.

In Johannesburg, there is a famous local proverb "If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together." This proverb speaks to the Golden Rule in that if you develop the ability to think

collectively for the good of all, you will achieve far more than you can ever achieve on your own. Treating others the same as you would treat yourself enables you to challenge yourself and achieve and do better than those that do not, and in this process, you develop the life skills to enable prosperity for yourself and those around you. The Golden Rule has also taught me that when we treat others equally to ourselves, we achieve equality in our society.

The second lesson I learnt was to be honest with myself and those around me. I have learnt both personally and professionally that acting with honesty even when no-one is looking speaks to a person of high integrity. When I was young, I thought my honest approach in life was a curse, as I felt some people took advantage and relied on my honesty for their personal gain; this experience was repeated often. However, later in life, I realised the journey of my life, where I integrated with people from different countries and cultures, taught me that my honest approach enabled trust in my relationships with diverse people; I learnt that my honesty was appealing to others and people trusted me. When you have built up a bank of trust, you can easily leverage from these relationships over time and as you get older, the trust bank gets very full and opens the gateway to more senior responsibilities, both professionally and within society.

My advice is to remain honest with yourself and others. When you are honest with yourself, your life is easier to navigate and if you are dishonest with others, how can you expect others to trust you over time. It makes the act of being dishonest less appealing. There are no short-cuts in life, only detours.

Regina Molloy, Class of 1990

FREE COMMUNITY EVENT - GUEST SPEAKER



Improve Your Mental Health by Developing Self-Care Strategies & Resilience

Presented by **Luke Kennedy**

Wednesday 23 June

7pm – 8.30pm
at Damascus College

book your **FREE** tickets at
damascus.vic.edu.au



Be. My. Best.



Mother Xavier Flood and Sister M Theodule Flood



MOTHER XAVIER FLOOD

DAMASCUS SISTER OF MERCY

“The ideal woman whom the Sisters of Mercy set before the students today is the woman that Mother Xavier strove to be”.

Sacred Heart College Annual, 1925

Marianne Flood was born in Ireland in 1851 and joined the Convent of Mercy, Ballyjamesduff, Ireland. She travelled to Australia while still a novice in 1872, as one of the foundation members in Warrnambool, before heading to Ballarat in 1881 as part of the founding group of the Convent of Mercy in Victoria Street.

Mother Xavier, or ‘Gran’ as she was affectionately known thanks to a young orphan placed at SHC in the early days, was a great educationalist. Beginning in the early days with the youngest students at St. Alipius, Mother Xavier used only the most modern methods of teaching, even travelling to Europe to bring back 48 sets of Froebel Gifts, an early childhood education method created by Friedrich Froebel. She was one of the first in the area to establish a complete Froebel Kindergarten in 1917.

It was Mother Xavier who was eventually able to obtain approval for the school from the Board of Education and as such, is recognised officially as the first Principal of SHC. When the Education Act of 1905 required all teachers to be registered according to the regulations of the Victorian Teachers College, Mother Xavier established the Aquin Training College in 1910, now the Australian Catholic University.

Mother Xavier Flood contracted the flu during the pandemic of 1919 and sadly passed away after a short illness. She was a much-beloved figure in Ballarat East, and the following extract from the 1925 SHC Annual reflects the high regard in which she was held:

“The girls came to her with all their joys and sorrows, sure of her kindly understanding. Long after they had left the school, they still turned to her for help and advice, each one feeling, as she had always felt, that she had a commanding place in Mother Xavier’s thoughts and affections. From their ABC days, they had instinctively run to ‘Gran’ with all their baby troubles.....The typical girl from Sacred Heart College then stands as the embodiment of Mother Xavier’s ideals. She is self-reliant and independent, not a hothouse plant unfitted to withstand the chill and withering blasts of the World-Spirit. Her life’s actions spring from the strong Catholic principles which she has nurtured within her mind. They were planted there by the teachers of her childhood, but she has made them truly her own.”

These words written so long ago yet still so relevant perfectly illustrate the extraordinary woman that was Mother Xavier Flood. Today, Xavier House at Damascus College proudly carries her name and strives to embody her remarkable spirit.

With thanks to the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea Archives for their assistance providing us with material for this piece.



2020 Award Recipients

ACADEMIC ASSEMBLY

DAMASCUS EVENT

On Thursday 25 February 2021, we welcomed back members of the Class of 2020 as we celebrated their academic excellence throughout 2020 at the annual Academic Assembly.

It was a wonderful affirmation of the students' hard work, dedication and perseverance displayed throughout what was a very challenging year - 2020.

Due to COVID-19, the event had limited attendance, and in order to share this wonderful occasion with the whole school cohort, it was recorded and shown at a later TA.

Our 2021 College Captains Maya Tolliday and Shaun Leonard were the MC's for the evening, and we were excited to welcome

back our College Dux Grace Young-Harvey as she addressed the audience and shared some beautiful memories of her time at Damascus. She also provided insight as to how she achieves academic excellence.

The Damascus College String Ensemble entertained the audience by performing 'The Black Swan' by Trevor J Addison, including William Deans, Thomas Deans, Amber Kennett, Rhyal Williams, Natalie Coad, Henry Sexton, Eloise McGifford and staff members Kristian Withers and Maria Russell.

Congratulations to all award recipients. Following are the award recipients recognised and celebrated.

2020 VCE UNIT 3 & 4 STUDY SCORE OF 40+ AWARD			
Name	Year	Subject	Score
Patrick Western	12	Drama	40
Sofie Sawka	12	Visual Communication Design	42
Symantha Sawka	12	Visual Communication Design	42
Gemma Angeli	12	Languages: Italian	43.66 *
Grace Young-Harvey	12	Legal Studies	47.26 *
Grace Young-Harvey	12	English	45
Fraser Crumpler	10	Maths: Further Mathematics	43
Maximillian Koelle	12	Maths: Further Mathematics	41
Caitlyn Holding	12	Maths: Further Mathematics	41
Stephanie Fitzgerald	12	Psychology	40
Patrick Western	12	Systems Engineering	43
Maya Tolliday	11	Biology	42.05 *
Mia Lepair	11	Biology	44.01 *
Grace Young-Harvey	12	Biology	46.8 *
Stephanie Fitzgerald	12	Physical Education	40
Ellouise Harris	12	Physical Education	42
Ellouise Harris	12	Health and Human Development	41
Grace Young-Harvey	12	Health and Human Development	46
SPECIAL AWARDS			
Hannah Farhall	12	2020 VCE Baccalaureate Award	
Jude Skewes-Clinton	12	2020 VCE Baccalaureate Award	
Madison Venville	12	2020 VET Achievement Award	
Elyssa Wiffen	12	2020 VET Achievement Award	
Joshua Matheson	11	2020 Westvic Staffing Solutions VET Excellence Award	
Jaida Palmer	12	2020 VCAL Achievement Award	
Symantha Sawka	12	Academic Honours Award	
Grace Young-Harvey	12	Academic Honours Award	
Symantha Sawka	12	2020 VCE ATAR of 90+ Award	90.05
Patrick Western	12	2020 VCE ATAR of 90+ Award	90.95
Grace Young-Harvey	12	2020 VCE ATAR of 90+ Award	99.4
Grace Young-Harvey	12	2020 Damascus College Dux	99.4

* Scaled study score







Elisha, Chloe, Geoff and Christopher Martin, 2021

OPPORTUNITIES, TEACHING AND VALUES

ALUMNI STORY

Elisha Martin nee Dilges, Class of 1996, chose to attend Sacred Heart College (SHC) when she began her secondary schooling because it was conveniently located just two blocks from her house and she liked the idea of being able to walk to school. It was familiar to her, and part of her neighbourhood. What she didn't know when she began was just how long her relationship with her high school would last.

Geoffery Martin, Class of 1996, enrolled at St Paul's Technical College. His father was a builder and wanted his sons to have the advantages he felt St Paul's offered. It emphasised the development of technical skills within a comprehensive Year 7 to 10 curriculum for boys. Geoff, however, insists that he "still struggles to find the right end of a hammer."

When Sacred Heart, St Paul's and St Martin's amalgamated in 1995 to form Damascus College, Elisha and Geoff were among the students who journeyed out to the Mt Clear campus to continue their high school education as Year 11 students of Damascus College.

After graduating from Damascus in 1996, both Elisha and Geoff enrolled at Australian Catholic University to study teaching, and it

was there that they really connected and became a couple. Elisha remembered Geoff from high school as a quiet guy. Geoff insisted, "boys were new and stayed pretty much to themselves" but can remember saying "Hey. I think we went to Damascus together." They were married in 2002.

Since 2019, Elisha has held the position of Reading Recovery Teacher for Grade 1 students at St Francis Xavier Primary School. Reading Recovery aims to assist children with both reading and writing. Prior to that, Elisha was a classroom teacher, Mathematics Leader and EMU teacher (Extending Mathematical Understanding). She has also done some teaching of the pre-service teachers at ACU and CRT work at Emmaus Primary School prior to Geoff working there.

Due to COVID last year, some of the carry-on effects from the little ones not attending school in a traditional classroom have meant that more students are missing the basics of reading as they start Grade 1. However, with the help of Mrs Martin, students are getting the support they need to succeed as readers and writers.



Year 12 ENG304 - 1996. Geoff Martin, top row right.

Geoff was a beloved member of staff at Damascus College for six years through to 2011. He has taught in public schools and gained additional experience there before he commenced work at Emmaus. Geoff is currently the Religious Education Coordinator and a member of Leadership at Emmaus Primary School.

Elisha and Geoff are the proud parents of Chloe and Christopher.

Chloe decided that Damascus College was the high school that she wanted to attend. She had enjoyed the activities that Damascus offered to her as a visiting Grade 4 student for the Maths Games Day (in which her team came 2nd) and couldn't stop talking about all that she had seen and done as a Grade 5 student visiting Damascus for her transition visit day. Elisha and Geoff fully supported her decision as they saw it as a continuation of the educational and spiritual traditions they had both enjoyed as students. Damascus continuing to nurture Chloe in the Catholic and Mercy values was so important to their family, but also to offer her the co-educational experience that reflects how society operates.

Chloe carries on the family tradition, following in Geoff's footsteps as a member of Xavier House. She has other aspirations for her time at Damascus as well. As a Damascus student, Chloe is enjoying several new subjects including humanities, wood and metal, and is learning French. She is participating in the Year 7 Drama Club and is eagerly awaiting her chance to audition for the 2021 College production. Chloe loves to dance, sing and act, but thinks that a career in the police force might be something she wants to do, maybe, one day.

For Christopher, enrolment at Damascus isn't until 2026. So, for right now, he just enjoys being aged seven. He enjoys a wide variety of school subjects and has a passion for Minecraft.

As educators, both Elisha and Geoff appreciate the education they received at Sacred Heart, St Paul's and eventually, Damascus College, and are delighted that their children will benefit from the opportunities, teaching and values that Damascus offers to all its students.



First staff picture with both Gerard and Barry Macklin, 1996

DAMASCUS COLLEGE STAFF - 1996

Back Row(L-R): Jeff Simpson, Tony Purcell, Neale Thompson, Brendan Bawden, Peter Sartori, Bernard Evans, Laurie McLean, Leon Beaton, Barry Macklin, Tom Millington, Chet Hudalla(Exchange Teacher), Ivanka Saric, Gary McIlvena, John Cairnes. **Fifth Row:** Carl Kierce, Andrew Seear, Patrick O'Shea, Neil Leonard, Peter Bond, Bernard Bradbury, Gerard Macklin, Danny Moore, Donnie Davidson, Frances Watt, Mary Fitz-Gerald, Ron Matthews, Wayne Forster, Jo Kennedy. **Fourth Row:** Sharen Wolfe, Sonia Kahanoff, Pam Nam, Barry Brown, John Joosten, Trish Rowe, Elaine Flavell, David Santamaria, Mark McLean, Anita Lenkic, Jenny Turner, Marie Mumane, Fiona Dawson, Maureen Gibcus. **Third Row:** Loui Bressan, Sr Anne Gargan, Lisa Rogers, Jo Reilly, Kerryn McGillen, Yvette Nesire-McNeil, Myra Trudgen, Kathy Wood, Tony Haintz, Fr. Greg Tait, Tony Godfrey, Greg Dow, Loretta Kaval, Geoff Armstrong. **Second Row:** David Davidson, Sr Luke Kenna, Lesley Gove, Catriona Sexton, Kate McKone, Dian Leonard, Carmen Duxson, Nancy Meiklejohn, Jeanette Johnston, Shahrukh Khan, Michael Fenelon, Margaret Lavery, Anne Griffin, Dianne Cody, Gordon Shaw, Greg Macallister. **Front Row:** Denise McKenzie, Trish Davey, Sue Gibson, Jenny Boyd, Julie Adriaans, Claire Hay, Fr Paul Mercovich, Sr Marie Davey, John Shannon(Principal), Tony Barrett, Karen Simpkin, Fran McCarty, Rita Cousins, Jenny Kinghorn, Michelle Butler, Jim Speechley, Sr Mary Anne Dwyer.

THEN AND NOW

GERARD MACKLIN

Hi, my name is Gerard Macklin and I've been asked to reminisce. That is a scary thought in itself because it truly means that you are "old enough" to reminisce. Some days I feel I'm not that old but then on others ... "well in my day, let me tell you!"

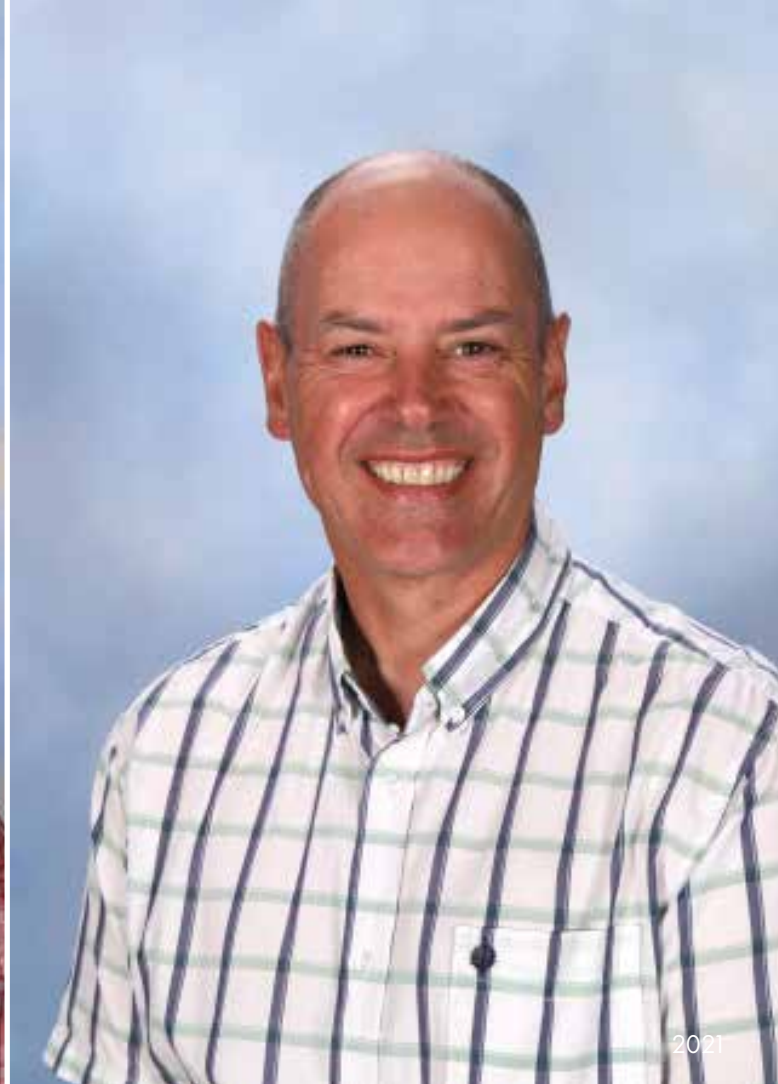
This rambling will go back and forth, making connections from my beginnings to now. As a child, I went to school at St Michael's Bungaree. At the time, the school had Mercy nuns, I think the last was Sr Christina. My connection then moved to St Paul's. I was a proud St Paul's boy in the early 1980s. In the four years at St Paul's, the person I stood next to in every class photo was none other than Andrew Seear. The connection from St Paul's to Damascus goes back a long way.

What made me become a teacher? This is an interesting question because I never actively wanted to be a teacher. I believe I fell into the profession. When I look back, I think I was destined to teach. My father had taken up teaching in his early forties when I was at St Paul's, my brother went to Aquinas followed by two of my best mates, another went to what is now Fed Uni to do teaching. And finally, my sister. I think teaching was inevitable.

My first teaching position – Catholic College Bendigo (now McAuley College). Yes, you guessed it, a Mercy co-education secondary college. My first Principal was Sr Sylvia Williams. This was very interesting because when Damascus College gave me the opportunity to go to Dublin for the Mercy Connect Program, the first person I saw when I walked into the Mercy Centre in Baggot Street Dublin was Sr Silvia. A beautiful then and now moment.

I moved back to Ballarat in 1995 and joined Damascus College in Victoria Street. For the first time in my life, I worked with my father, Barry Macklin. It was great working with my dad. We could discuss all manner of things, good, bad and indifferent. It was at this stage I realised the privilege that tradies had working with their parents.

Class sizes in Bendigo were 32 but when I arrived at the "Vic St" Campus, class sizes were around the 26 mark. Having four to six less students in a class may not seem like much; however, it is significant when it comes to talking to each of your students in the class. I remember teaching, especially in the Building 9 portables and the old corner block Building 4. Building 4 still exists now, if you go past it still stands because of a heritage overlay. Building 4 was



so cold that I recall the day a mouse jumped out of the paper tray of the printer when I went to fill it. Boy, did that scare the living daylights out of me. The kids in room 401 and 402 were killing themselves laughing.

Two funny stories... During my first week at Damascus College, I taught a class that had four cousins in the class and a cousin's son. I had to ask dad is this normal for us? The other funny story was being House Leader to my niece and nephews. I always had a good rapport with them and their friends. It allowed me to stop quite a few interesting situations. The boys would always ask... "How did you know?"

Finally, when I started teaching, I was a specialist Year 7 and 8 teacher of RE, English and Humanities. I loved working with the "littlies". I did this for over 25 years. It is only recently that I started to teach Year 12; this is about the same time Richmond won its first premiership in 37 years – 2017. I now teach Year 11 and 12 Business Management and Legal Studies, and I've had a crack at teaching the Russian and Chinese Revolutions. It is a different relationship with the older students. If I had started to teach Year

12 earlier perhaps Richmond might have won some more finals – probably not. However, when you form relationships you create trust. This is when you know, and the students know, that they can work to the best of their ability. They can trust you to have their back.

An unexpected outcome from teaching is the gifts that you receive in appreciation. In 2019, I received a framed photo of the Richmond Premiership, a very expensive gift but also one that the students had obviously thought about. In 2020, after the COVID shutdowns, the Geography class took a photo and created a framed photo and cup of us with all the quotes we had over the course of MS Teams during the year (thanks Jack, Katie, Jas, Sofie and the others).

I wouldn't swap my job for anything. What other job would you meet up to 150 to 200 new people every year. All those differing personalities. It truly is a privilege to teach and to be entrusted with someone else's daughter or son.

Gerard Macklin, Staff

STAFF FAREWELLS AND RETIREMENTS

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

DEB LARSEN has been a servant of Catholic education since 1980. Her service includes periods at Marian College West Sunshine, Sacred Heart College, Loreto College and St Francis Xavier Primary School. Deb worked at Sacred Heart College in 1983 and 1984. She returned in 1994 and commenced her service at Damascus College in 1998. Deb's contribution to Mercy education spans a total of 26 years - a wonderful effort. Deb has played many key roles within our community over that time. Her contribution to the Languages team in more recent times is well-known, and she has been a key contributor to international trips and language-immersion experiences. Deb served on the Consultative Committee as the Principal's nominee from 2011 to 2018. She has always demonstrated an enthusiasm for students who have struggled with their learning, and she has played a significant role within House leadership. Deb has always been respected by students and colleagues, and we celebrate and thank her for her contribution to this community.

LIZ SARAH retired at the end of 2020 and has been a critical member of the St Martin's Resource Centre team – always supporting students in the library and with resources they need. Liz assisted students for many years in the library both at Victoria Street and then here at Mt Clear. Liz's eight years on staff at Damascus have been characterised by her good humour, her commitment to education and her care for the young people of this community. We thank and acknowledge Liz for her work at Damascus College.

BRENDAN DOYLE began his career at Damascus with some casual work back in the year 2000. Over the last 20 years, he has been a committed and hard-working member of the College staff who has always kept a concern for student well-being and achievement at the core of his vocation. Brendan has taught many students particularly in Humanities, English and Religious Education, and amongst these, he has had a particular influence on the students of McAuley House. He has always been available to support his TA, McAuley 8, who he has shamelessly advocated for over the years. We acknowledge and thank Brendan for his commitment and contribution to Damascus College.

RYAN DOCKING concluded his teaching at Damascus at the end of 2020 after a five-year commitment to the students of Damascus College. Ryan has been respected by his colleagues and English students for his commitment to their best outcomes. He has built up a great rapport with the students of McAuley 2. Ryan also provided invaluable support to understanding Microsoft Teams as 2020 unfolded, and we wish him well as he moves interstate to be closer to family.



Deb Larsen



Liz Sarah



Brendan Doyle



Ryan Docking



Please join us

BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISING BREAKFAST

Thursday 3 June, from 7am - 8.45am
Damascus College, Geelong Rd

Special Guest Speaker is
JOCELYN BIGNOLD (OAM)

Jocelyn is CEO of McAuley Community Services for Women which provides support for women/children experiencing family violence and homelessness. Jocelyn has over 25 years' service to the community and was recognised for her commitment to making people's lives better with a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2020.

Book your ticket or table at damascus.vic.edu.au



connecting@Damascus



Be. My. Best.

damascus.vic.edu.au