



ST DOMINIC'S PRIORY COLLEGE **OLD SCHOLARS' ASSOCIATION**

IN BLACK & WHITE NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2025

ST DOMINIC'S PRIORY
COLLEGE OLD SCHOLARS
COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Elena Tarraran (*President*)

Sr Jillian Havey OP

Briony Pauley (*Deputy
President*)

Marianne Yeo (*Treasurer*)

Jo Duffy (*Secretary*)

Kathleen Halliday

Maureen Carpenter

Michelle Hogan

Sharon Berry

Tina Grasso

Anna Di Salvatore

Maria Gianquitto

Nicki Stewart

Liz Gauci

FROM THE PRESIDENT

ELENA TARRARAN

A jam-packed newsletter!

Dear Old Scholars and friends

It has been a while, but we have plenty of news to share with you in this edition of 'In Black & White'.

Our year began with the Annual Mass and Morning Tea which is always a wonderful gathering and opportunity to catch up. Old scholars who had purchased a Personalised Paver were thrilled to see it in situ. Details on how to purchase your paver is included in this publication. On behalf of the OSA, I would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks for your generosity. We were able to send the Tan Son Nhi School in Ho Chi Minh City an amazing total of \$1,000.

It was my pleasure earlier in the year to attend the Merit Assembly to present the Maureen Cassidy Dux of School Award. The 2024 recipient was Alana Nguyen.

It never ceases to amaze me at the extraordinary achievements of so many of the girls who were educated at St Dominic's Priory College. These women have displayed great determination when confronted by challenges striving to achieve their goals. That strength and resilience comes from the women who certainly understood challenges and perseverance. The Dominican Sisters who have taught and encouraged so many of us instilled in us the belief we are capable of great things no matter what path in life we choose. This resonates loud and clear in the articles printed in the past and on the following pages.

*strengthening connections and lifelong friendships
honouring the dominican traditions*



Events have taken place and are up and coming!

It was heartwarming to see so many Old Scholar community members and their friends attend the Premiere of the short film 'In Truth and Love' by Living Stories. The film certainly stirred our emotions and deepened our gratitude for the Dominican Sisters. If you were unable to attend the Premiere, then please join us for a Matinee Session on Sunday 31st August. You will find your invitation and ticket details on page 2.

Be sure to note the coming events on our calendar:- Class Reunions and the College Fete.

Looking to the future. If your graduation year ends in a 6, why not get the ball rolling on a reunion in 2026. The OSA is always ready to assist where they can so, please get in touch.

Email oldscholars@stdominics.sa.edu.au

Just to finish off please share any news with us as we would love to include it in our November edition of 'In Black and White'



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FILM PREMIERE
30TH March 2025

IN TRUTH AND LOVE

The buzz in the air was audible when a short film launched on March 30 in front of a crowd at St Dominic's Priory College in North Adelaide.

In Truth and Love was funded by the Dominican Sisters of North Adelaide and St Dominic's Priory College, and showcases the history and evolution of the Dominican Sisters over the past 140 years.

St Dominic's Old Scholars Association committee member Tina Grasso welcomed attendees to the launch.

"Today we gather to celebrate a remarkable milestone for all who have been touched by the Spirit of the Dominican Sisters," Tina said. "As we reflect on our rich history, we are reminded of the unwavering commitment, love and faith that have guided the sisters throughout the decades. This film is not merely a collection of images and stories, it is a tribute to the countless individuals who dedicated their lives to education, community service and a pursuit of truth."

Many attendees were visibly moved by the film and the school's effect on their life, including old scholar Loretta Comacchio who was head prefect in 1980.

"This school had such a big impact on my life," Loretta said. "All my value systems come from here, and you can't say that about any old school. Sr Jill was such a role model. Every time I think of her, I smile."

Another public viewing of *In Truth and Love* will be held at St Dominic's Priory College on Sunday 31st August 2025. Details on page 3.



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OLD SCHOLAR CLASS REUNIONS:

CLASS OF 2020 –

5 YEAR REUNION

Sunday 21st September
11.00am

CLASS OF 2005 – 20 YEAR REUNION

Friday 26th September
5.30pm.

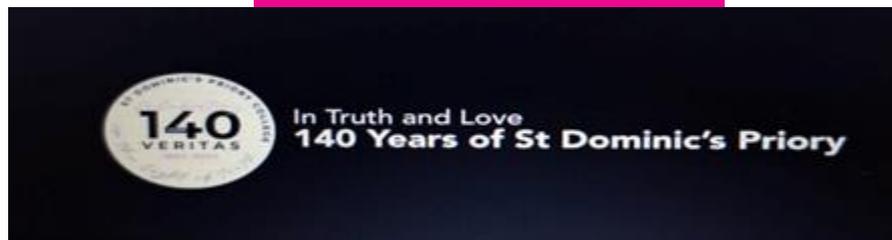
CLASS OF 1975 – 50 YEAR REUNION

Sunday 9th November
11.00am

See details on page 8.

Please address all reunion
inquiries to
[oldscholars@stdominics.
sa.edu.au](mailto:oldscholars@stdominics.sa.edu.au)

You're invited



SUNDAY 31ST AUGUST 2025, 2.00 PM MOLESWORTH STREET, NORTH ADELAIDE

Please join us for a matinee session of our 'Living Stories' film,
'In Truth and Love'

exploring 140 years of the Dominican Sisters of
North Adelaide.

Including interviews with Sr Jillian Havey, Stephanie Burley, Josie Revesz
and Muriel Noujaim

Where: St Dominic's Priory College

When: Sunday, August 31st 2.00pm for 2.30pm
(This part of the day will conclude at roughly 3.15)
Please join us after the screening for refreshments.
Book by August 24th.

Tickets are **\$25 including a glass of champagne.**

Bank details: St Dominic's Old Scholars
BSB 065000
AC 00902787

Reference: Your name and no of tickets.

**For queries please contact:
Jo Duffy - 0411 305 042 or
Elena Tarraran – 0410 205 073**



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BIRTHS:

JACQUI MILLS

Congratulations to Jacqui and her husband who welcomed the arrival of their second daughter, Eliza Jane Larwood



SDPCOSA LIFE

MEMBERS:

Joan Cahill

Colleen Harris

Sr Jillian Havey

Maureen Carpenter

Kathleen Halliday

Jean Otten (dec)

Helen Power(dec)

Karen Taylor

Elena Tarraran

Dalma Romaldi

Leonie Hines

Sandy Lee

Rebecca Hoskins Bartlett

OLD SCHOLAR PROFILE:

ANNE LUCAS (1987)



Recently committee member Sr Jillian ran into, (pardon the pun!) Old Scholar, **Anne Lucas**.

Anne has generously provided an update of her exciting adventures which has seen her take on challenges across the globe.

Anne, St Dominic's Head Prefect in 1987 has covered some amazing distances across the globe in the last 18 years, all while holding down her day job as Assistant Director, Engagement at Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

An unexpected meeting in the porch of St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral recently brought us news of her amazing adventures.

Most recently in June 2025, Anne embarked on a huge adventure in Mongolia, taking part in the Gobi March which is an ultramarathon event, running and walking 250 kms over 6 stages and 7 days.

A decade earlier, Anne did the Atacama Crossing, a RACINGTHEPLANET event in Chile, covering 2500 kms in a 6-stage ultramarathon.

What draws Anne to these challenges, and what do they give her?

Keeping fit and challenging myself physically and mentally is something I find rewarding and satisfying. Travelling to exotic destinations to connect with nature and traverse vast ancient and often remote landscapes on foot is also alluring for me.

There is also the social aspect to these events, the almost instant bond formed with other adventure seeking, nature loving people from around the world.

Some of Anne's amazing adventures include:

2007 Kokoda Trail

2008 Inca Trail, running adventure Peru

2010 Dead Sea Marathon, Jordan (image right)

2011 Canberra Marathon ACT

2012 Atacama Crossing, Chile (image left)

2016 New York Marathon

2021 Pichi Rich Half Marathon, Quorn SA

June 2025 Gobi March, central Mongolia

All the very best on your next challenge, Anne.



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WE BID FAREWELL

Condolences and prayers are extended to the families of deceased Old Scholars, who have died in recent months.

We remember:

Elizabeth Shoolbread, graduate from 1987, who passed away on April 13th. Our condolences are extended to her family.

Our prayers and thoughts are also with the McMahon family. **Christine McMahon** former student of the 50s and 60s passed away peacefully on July 3, aged 77.

She is the elder sister of North Adelaide Dominican Sister Julie Mc Mahon.

WE REMEMBER

VIRGINIA MEHRTENS

ENGINEERING TRAILBLAZER

Sincere thanks to Warwick Mehrtens and family for alerting us to a very recent significant tribute to the career of old scholar **Virginia Mehrtens**, nee Lang, who died in 2021.

Virginia became a boarder at St. Dominic's at the age of 10 in 1964. In the late 60s she took a school trip to the Snowy Mountains hydro- electric scheme which inspired her interest in engineering. Teachers at St. Dom's encouraged Virginia in her education, allowing her to study Physics and Chemistry at nearby Blackfriars School.

The University of South Australia Time Capsule features the following tribute: *Virginia Mehrtens (nee Lang), graduated with a B Tech (Civil Engineering) in 1974 and thus became the first woman to graduate in Engineering from SAIT. Virginia enjoyed a career in structural engineering and project management with the Public Buildings Department of SA, and then in the late 1990s joined UniSA as a Lecturer in Construction Management. She was a dedicated and well-loved Lecturer and colleague until her retirement due to ill health in 2013, and sadly she passed away in 2021. In addition to her paid roles, Virginia was actively involved as a founding member of the SA Women in Engineering group, as a Board Member of St Dominic's Priory College, a member of the SA Heritage Council, and as an advocate and supporter of education for refugees in SA.*

To further honour Virginia's achievements, Emeritus Professor Julie Mills, BEng (Hons), MTech, PhD STEM from Uni SA, has developed a recent presentation on women in engineering during History Week in SA, thereby celebrating Virginia's place in that history.

In the audience at Professor Mills' recent presentation was well respected Dominican educator, Sr. Noreen Reynolds, OP, herself a former boarder at St. Dominic's.



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OLD SCHOLARS HELPING CURRENT SCHOLARS.

In our previous newsletters we asked you, our old scholars, if you could help out current students and families finding it hard at the moment purchasing uniforms and school supplies.

Principal, Dr Helen Steele and the OSA committee want to thank those kind and generous Old Scholars who donated towards these items.

Your support has now benefitted two students from different families with a full winter uniform and additional jumper.

If you feel you can support students and their families in our school community, you can donate via the Old Scholars account:

BSB: 065-000 (CBA)
ACCOUNT #: 0090 2787
NAME: ST DOMINIC'S
OLD SCHOLARS

*** Please make sure you include your name and code-word HELP.*

Thank you for your ongoing support, kindness and generosity and helping to 'Pay it forward'.

WE REMEMBER: (CONT)

VIRGINIA MEHRTENS

Professor Mills, (whose daughter Jacqui was St Dominic's Head Prefect in 2011), gave an impressive overview of the history of women in engineering in South Australia.

It is fitting that Emeritus Professor Julie Mills' fine presentation has been accepted for inclusion in this edition of the St Dominic's Old Scholar's newsletter.

She tells an interesting story entitled **"Daughters of Invention- The History of Women Engineers in South Australia."**

Women are still in the minority in the profession of engineering, but those women who do enter the profession have successful and rewarding careers. Several old scholars from St Doms are engineers, and one was recently celebrated as part of History Week in SA. Virginia (Ginny) Mehrtens (nee Lang) was the first woman to graduate with an engineering degree from the University of South Australia (then known as South Australian Institute of Technology – SAIT) in 1974.

Quoting Virginia's account of her early experiences of the glass ceiling Julie records," She sent off 20 job applications and just as swiftly got 20 rejections" By 1978 things have progressed for her and the Advertiser states - 'she works in an office with 50 men and two other women, a technical officer and a receptionist."

Virginia is described as a passionate educator, a person who cared so much about her students that she was prepared, while preparing dinner, to be interrupted by struggling first year students needing reassurance. Of her place in society as a civil engineer she states, "I feel happier being related to people than to gigantic projects. I am interested in the management of natural and water resources. I would prefer to help grow more trees than use more steel." Professor Mills' presentation also does justice to Virginia's contribution to her wider community, through her engagement in: The SA Heritage Council; as Board member at St Dominic's Priory College 1986-2002; as Member of St. Ignatius' Norwood Refugee Education Support Group. Virginia is remembered with pride, respect and affection at St. Dominic's.



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**UPCOMING
EVENTS:**



2025 COLLEGE
FETE AND
AUCTION

ST DOMINIC'S OLD SCHOLARS
CAKE STALL

It's that time of the year again, as the College prepares for the annual St Dominic's Priory College Fete and Auction. This event brings together community, music and food with a vibrant day of fun and festivities celebrating all things St Doms.

Calling all Old Scholar bakers and lovers of fine baked goods for the Cake Stall convened by the Old Scholars. We welcome donations from our old scholar community or come along to purchase some delicious treats. All proceeds go towards the College.



There is also an opportunity to join Sr Jillian for the **Chapel, Cloister and Museum Tours** delving into the rich history of St Doms at the Fete.



EMAIL:

[oldscholars@stdominics.
sa.edu.au](mailto:oldscholars@stdominics.sa.edu.au)

 GROUP



OLD SCHOLARS' WEB PAGE



Class reunions and school tour

CLASS OF 2020 – 5 YEAR REUNION
Sunday 21st September 11.00am

Contact: Isabel Palmer
isabel_palmer@icloud.com

CLASS OF 2005 – 20 YEAR REUNION
Friday 26th September 5.30pm.

Contact: Kristen Fanto
kristenbagnell88@gmail.com

CLASS OF 1975 – 50 YEAR REUNION
Sunday 9th November 11.00am

Contact: Elena Tarraran - tarrarane1975@gmail.com
or Briony Pauley - briony.pauley@live.com.au

If you are planning a class reunion in 2026, please contact
oldscholars@stdominics.sa.edu.au

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UPCOMING EVENTS:



EMAIL:

oldscholars@stdominics.sa.edu.au



GROUP



OLD SCHOLARS' WEB PAGE



KEEP IN TOUCH

Want to stay connected with the US? We would love to hear any news that you would like to share with the Old Scholars community.

EMAIL: oldscholars@stdominics.sa.edu.au

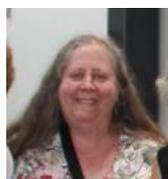


FACEBOOK: [ST DOMINIC'S PRIORY COLLEGE OLD SCHOLARS' ASSOCIATION](#)

WEBSITE: [Old Scholars' Association](#) - membership form and personalise paver order form can be completed on this page.

Purchase a personalised paver

Click on the link to download an Order form -
[Old Scholars' Association – St Dominic's Priory College](#)



In closing, a reflection from OSA Committee member Liz Gauci.....

Our little hearts would jump for joy when we saw Sr Josephine walking up from the kitchen doors of the convent towards the Peppercorn tree. Her face was often flushed from baking. A tea towel was placed strategically over her arm and hand to protect her from the heat of the trays, and she also wore material sleeve protectors. We would run towards her and try to see what she was carrying. We smiled with delight when we saw rows of pasties on her trays, and the aroma was so delicious never be forgotten. Sister Josephine had such a kind face there was a loving presence about her. I remember how joyfully she served us. There was a deep peacefulness and contentedness about her as I remember. She would look into your eyes and connect with you and smile her wonderful smile. Her eyes twinkled with happiness as she served us with her pasties. As I remember they were thruppence each before the arrival of decimal currency. Sister was so dedicated working to support the needs of the poor children in the Solomon Islands. As an adult now I can see that Sr Josephine showed strong love and commitment in her serving and giving of herself. As a lay sister she did not teach at the school but served the Sisters of her community with love and devotion in mindful and caring ways, creating community and home with her gifts and loving care.

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