

## Celebrating **80 Years** of Sisters of Mercy in Timaru



*Back Row L – R: Sisters Mary Hanrahan, Mary Cosgrove, Mary Gleeson, Maria O’Connell, Margaret Thorn, Mary-Anne Cahill, Lorraine Thomas, Pat Butler, Mary Catherwood, Laumanu Ma’afu, Bernadette Fitzgerald, Marie Poff.*

*Front Row L – R: Sisters Anne Frost, Raylene Dwyer, Eileen Dwyer, Kath Fitzsimmons, Adrian Keating, Peg Flaherty, Elizabeth Sherry, Celine Shanks, Marie McLean, Diana Thomas.*

*Sitting on the floor at the right is Sister Monika Mo’ale*

The **Mercy College Past Pupils Annual Dinner 2016** was particularly special this year. It was held in November to commemorate the 80 years the sisters of Mercy have been in Timaru. The annual mass at St Thomas’s Church was well attended by past pupils with Fr Joaquin Camano officiating the Mass and Terry Kennedy played the organ beautifully to the well-chosen music for the special occasion.

A luncheon was held afterwards at Seven Oaks reception centre and was enjoyed by all. Everyone was thrilled to have 24 Sisters of Mercy present. The Jubilee Cake was cut by Sister Raylene Dwyer from Wellington and Raelene Bailey (President). Sister Elizabeth Sherry and Sister Diana Thomas addressed the gathering with some of their wonderful “Memories” which were much enjoyed.

A large banner acknowledged the occasion and there were several display boards with a large number of Mercy College photos provided from the Roncalli Archives. Sister Bernadette from Christchurch

bought down six dolls from the Christchurch Old Girls Archives, each depicting the various clothing worn by the Sisters of Mercy throughout the years. Also on display was the Mercy College doll and Sacred Heart doll who are cared for locally by Eileen Kerr.

Sister Raylene Dwyer addressed the group of 106 people briefly and then thanked everyone for attending. It was a lovely ending for a wonderful day.

### Principals of Mercy College

1936	Sister Mary Aloysius
1937-51	Sister Mary Creenaiva
1952-60	Sister Mary Aloysius
1961-66	Sister Mary Stephen
1967-68	Sister Pauline O’Regan (Sister Mary Jerome)
1969-72	Sister Mary Chrysostom
1972-74	Sister Mary Cosgrove
1975-81	Sister Mary Catherwood

# Staff Departures 2016

*This year over 140 years of experience will be leaving the college. This says something about the College- that the staff regard it as a wonderful place to work in and so they stay year after year.*

## **Bernard Pavletich: 1976-2016** (in his own words)

Our family has a long connection with the college - both my grandmother (1895) and mother (1927) were taught by the Sacred Heart nuns. I joined the staff of Mercy College in 1976 and my own three children attended Roncalli from 2001 to 2012.

I have seen many changes over 40 years, the most obvious being the College becoming co-ed and integrated into the state system.

There has also been a gradual decline of involvement by the priests and nuns with lay staff fulfilling many of their roles (including myself as I teach predominantly Religious Studies). There was of course the removal of the infamous "Green fence"- the Berlin Wall between St Pat's and Mercy and there have been huge changes in terms of buildings from the demise of the convent in 1984 to the building of the library and chapel in 1992 and the gym in 1998. The look of students is changed with the teal of Mercy & the royal blue of St Pat's replaced by the maroon of Roncalli. Finally, of course I have seen great technological changes in my time with the arrival of computers into the school in 1984 followed by the internet and smartphones and the consequent demise of both text and exercise books.

The great constant is the students and the staff. While people move on each year a great continuity remains in terms of atmosphere, personalities and friendliness. Each year group and every class are distinct and all have made a contribution. I have been fortunate to have been led by great Principals, all different - Sr Mary, Fr Beban, John Hogue and Chris Comeau.

I feel I am leaving Roncalli in good heart with its continued emphasis on Marist and Mercy values. The College has been good to me; that's why I stayed for 41 years and I hope I have been good for it. – BP



## **Gerry Fennessy: 1987-2016**

Gerry initially came to Roncalli as an Economics teacher, before moving into counselling, then served for a number of years (1999-2010) as Deputy Principal (initially under John Hogue and then Chris Comeau) and helped to create the Roncalli we know today. Gerry has made an outstanding contribution in two specific areas- firstly the introduction, development and promotion of Outdoor Ed at Roncalli. Such activities as kayaking at the Abel Tasman, snow-caving in Queenstown, tramping in Fiordland and Stewart Island, and white water rafting on the Rangitata are just some of the activities that Roncalli students have and are still experiencing and this is without doubt all thanks to Gerry's drive to encourage students to experience the outdoors. In 2006 Roncalli College received the Education Outdoors NZ Best Programme Award. The success of this programme played a considerable part in his other great innovation; the introduction of International students to Roncalli where in recent years we have hosted annually 25 to 30. They have come principally from Japan, Korea, Thailand, and Hong Kong but have from time to time included Germans and Brazilians. They are largely here to improve their English but they and the kiwi students both benefit from the mixing of the cultures.

The College is extremely grateful to the wonderful contribution Gerry has made over 30 years and his engaging and humorous personality will be remembered by one and all at "Honcarri College" as one Brazilian international student called it.



## **Margaret Ann Jenkin: 1990-2016**

Margaret first came to Roncalli as a Cleaner in 1990, before taking over the Tuck Shop responsibility from Bev de Joux. Initially the tuck shop was quite small but Margaret Ann insisted on its expansion as the school roll increased and the extension was completed in 2003. Margaret Ann has a tremendous rapport with students and staff and has increased the range and variety of food on offer to meet the changing times and tastes. Thank you for 26 years of wonderful service to the college.



## **Adrienne Quartier 2007-2016**

She first came to Roncalli in 2003 on section working with Jane Hill. She was appointed Guidance Counsellor in 2007 working from her office in the McAuley block. Most of the 100 plus students she saw annually came on a voluntary basis while a few were sometimes referred by staff. Her role is not a public one but is essential for the well-being of students, particularly in times when the College faces tragedy. Adrienne described her position as a Health role in an Educational setting. She is returning to the Timaru CYFS office as the Supervisor of Guidance Counsellors and Social Workers. Adrienne has a pleasant and engaging personality and her presence will be sorely missed around the college.



## Lynne Macfarlane: 1975-76 and 1992-2016

Lynne has been involved in our school's history on two occasions. Firstly as a music teacher at Mercy college in the mid 70's and latterly as the Librarian for over twenty years beginning in the early 90's. Together with Mrs Cameron (Faass) she ran the new library from her special "glass office". She ensured there was a wide variety of books to cater for all tastes and was extremely helpful with staff and students alike in research assignments. Like Mrs Brien and Mr Pav she is one of the last links with Mercy College 1936 – 1981.



Lynn 1976



1976 Lynne MacFarlane is in the second row dressed in red. This was also Mr Pav's first year at the college, standing on the left by Sister M. Carmel.

## Robyn Brien 1994-2016

Robyn is retiring as Assistant Principal and Head of Arts (Music, Drama, Visual Arts and Graphics). She came first to Roncalli as a part timer teaching School Cert Music to a school she knew well, having been taught Music Theory by Mother Corona. She gradually took over more music classes as her role developed and soon she was involved in the associated work of organising school productions as Music Director or Producer such as Joseph, Godspell, Little Shop of Horrors, Addams Family and most recently Shrek. Robyn organised Instrument teachers, the Choir, the Annual Arts (Music) Festivals, Barbershop and competing in Big Sing. Her aim in music was to give every individual student the maximum opportunity to express themselves and this meant a vast array of options for them to follow. In addition she had other important roles in the school including Senior Course Co-Ordinator and being a dean at various levels, before becoming Assistant Principal specialising in Human Resources. Robyn intends to study full-time next year at an extramural student at Massey next year completing a Mediation Degree specialising in Dispute Resolution, which she then hopes she can use that knowledge within the Timaru community. We thank her for her tireless efforts in the last 20 years and wish her well for the future.



## Barbara Ellena: 2007-2016

Barbara has taught in the Maths Department throughout her time at Roncalli. She is an extremely dedicated teacher who gives all her students individual attention and held numerous tutorials to help their understanding. The staff will especially miss her "Maths Meetings" with Nic Wilson every morning, her sense of humour and love of sport.



Roncalli students who started at Roncalli in 1986 had a 30 year reunion over Labour Weekend and included a tour of their old school as part of their get-together. They had a tour of their old school, met up with some of their former teachers and had a very enjoyable weekend.



## SOCIAL JUSTICE TRIP



Students in front of a building they built.

One of the key pillars of Roncalli College is Social Justice. This means that as individuals and as a community the pupils and staff are responsible for promoting a just society that ensures dignity, tolerance, freedom and equity for all people regardless of race, sex, religion, orientation, or disability.

In July, a group make up of Roncalli students, Liana Abraham, Nikita Bellew, Jaymee Cannell, Michaela Cooper, Nicole Fahey, Chevaughan Greer-Stickings, Sharleka Honeyman, Renee Leonard, Sophie Lowen, Emily O'Connor, Grace Piddington, Hollie Rattray, Korlina Volkov, Hannah Watson, three parents, Vicky O'Connor, Mark Lowen and Stu Piddington and teacher Ellen Walsh travelled to Cambodia and Vietnam for a trip of a lifetime. They wanted to understand and experience different cultures, visit some historic sites and, most importantly, help the people with a social justice project. To this end, the group provided various services, including: building eight homes for rural Cambodian families over 2 days, funded eight wells for rural Cambodian families and donated money to a project that rescues Hanoi street kids.

# Past Pupils

## Mercy College Class of 71 Reunion

The Class of 71 held a reunion on the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> March 2016 in Timaru.

32 of the original three classes of students were present at the dinner held at The Stables on Beaconsfield Rd. Sr Kathleen Rushton was also with them to celebrate 45 years since they started at Mercy College. Many hadn't seen each other since they left school. The laughter and chatter continued late into the evening and again at the brunch on Sunday which was at The Oxford.

Odette Spruyt gave a short account of her life's journey with Mother Theresa in Calcutta and in the convent in Rome.

The group attended 9am Mass at Sacred Heart and then went for a tour of the college with Mr Dave Batchelor, the College Archivist. It was great seeing how things have changed and all the old photos of their years at Mercy.

All agreed that they should do it again in five years' time to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup>. Hopefully with even more in attendance at the next one.



## Darren Wright Roncalli 1984 - 1988

Mr **Darren Wright** became a Member of The New Zealand Order of Merit in the New Year's Honours List in 2016 for services to the community. He has been the Chair of the Christchurch Community Forum since 2011 and has made a significant contribution in this role to the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery for the Greater Christchurch area. The Wright's family home in Sumner, known as "Rock Villa", was destroyed in the February 2011 earthquake. Darren's wife and son were home when it struck.



Darren in his 5<sup>th</sup> Form class in 1986. Darren is on the right in the 2<sup>nd</sup> row beside Mrs Nicol.

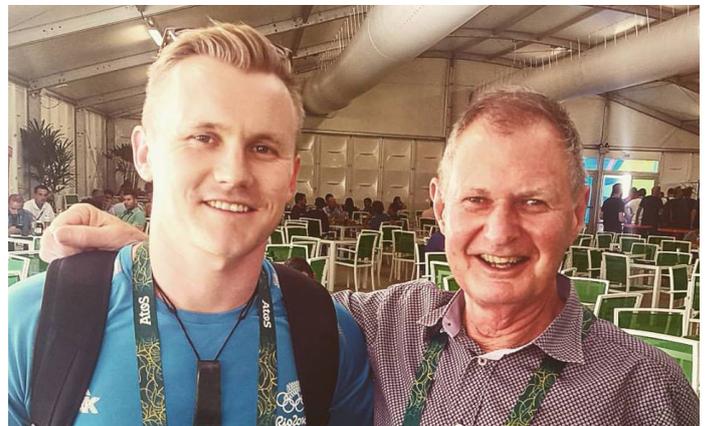
Two Roncalli 2009 graduates were admitted to the Bar in 2016 - **Libby Zandbergen** (Head girl 2009) and **Jordan Hamel** (whose Probable career in the 2009 magazine was journalist).



Professor (Raymond) **Mark Henaghan**, Dean of the Faculty of Law at Otago University visited the college in 2016 to promote the Otago Law School to Timaru students. While at the college he was thrilled to see his name on the new St Pat's Honours board as Head Prefect in 1971. Mark himself studied law at Otago University and even had a cameo role in the NZ film Scarfies as himself. Mark is an Associate Fellow of the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. Mark is regarded as an international expert in family Law.



Two past pupils from two different centuries caught up at the Rio Olympics this year. **John McBeth**, Member of the Order of New Zealand and well known sports commentator is a past pupil of St Pat's (1963-65). He is photographed here with **Finian Scott** (Roncalli 2004-2008).



**Tania Savage** (nee Shand) Roncalli: 1990-94 became Principal of Cardinal McKeefry School in July 2015. The school is a Catholic, integrated school that caters for students in Years 1 to 8. It is located in Wilton, Wellington. Tania was previously a staff member at St Francis Xavier, Tawa, and subsequently Deputy Principal at Holy Cross, Miramar. She is currently also completing a Masters in Education at Victoria University

