



MERCY COLLEGE ALUMNI

Where are they now?

Introducing:

*Liz Monahan
Former Principal 2000 to 2010*

*Thank you
for sharing your story!*



At the time I was appointed to Mercy College I was Deputy Principal of another college and not really thinking about Principalship. I saw the advertisement for Principal in the newspaper and thought it looked to be an interesting school, unlike others I had taught at. I investigated further and found many aspects which appealed to me, so I applied and following two interviews was notified I had been successful. The Chair of the interview panel was Father Paul Kane, President of the Canonical Administrators of the College and Chair of the College Board. He was a great support to me both professionally and personally during my leadership and remained a great friend until his death.

My first impressions of the school were that it was a very lively and supportive environment. Most of the girls were very committed to their studies, the teachers and support staff were dedicated and enthusiastic, and the school operated very smoothly.



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Students were friendly and the atmosphere was welcoming. Walking around the campus I particularly noted the fine artwork, displays of student and staff work. As many of the staff had been there for a number of years, there was a wealth of experience to draw upon. Coming in with a fresh eye, I was also able to identify possible enhancements for the physical learning environment and ways in which the curriculum could evolve to best serve the needs of our students and the changing world.

In my second year as Principal I travelled to Ireland with Mercy leaders from schools and other ministries to walk in the footsteps of Catherine McAuley and learn more about the Mercy ethos and Catherine's vision. This was an amazing experience which has inspired much of my work since.

I was fortunate in my time at Mercy to be strongly supported by skilled teams of leaders and educators. Developments were always a team effort and constantly with the best interests of the students at heart. We achieved a great deal in terms of building and renovation, but more importantly in ensuring that students continued to receive a contemporary, challenging and relevant education in a safe and supportive environment.





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I enjoyed teaching and took classes in Religious Education and Mathematics in some years. However, many of my fondest memories are from outside the classroom where I had the opportunity to get to know the girls on a different level. This included Footsteps days, camps and retreats, an Italian study tour, debating evenings and musical productions. And who could forget the Year 10 Ball? We celebrated many Mercy Days together – Mass and an assembly followed by activities and entertainment in the afternoon. Mercy girls came from a rich variety of cultural backgrounds and were generous in sharing their stories, customs, food and traditions.

The college was incredibly busy with students engaged in a broad range of activities in addition to their academic studies. It was always a pleasure to see student achievement and improvement, whether it be academic, creative, sporting or personal.



Our aim was always to provide our girls with a basis to contribute with purpose to their world community as confident, articulate and self-aware young women and in the most part our faith in them was rewarded. Student leadership was a strong focus during my years at Mercy.



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It was a pleasure to watch the development of our dedicated and committed student leaders as they led the SRC and their Houses and other groups, initiated and organised student events and represented the college so positively at external forums. The skills they gained will stay with them for life.

Our students were always extraordinarily generous in the support of others, whether this involved practical assistance or fundraising. You could always count on Mercy girls to respond to any call for help. They turned out in large numbers for events such as Walk Against Want and Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday appeal and were strong supporters of the Children First Foundation.





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I retired from Mercy College in order to be able to spend more time with my children and grandchildren who live overseas. For a time, I worked with Catholic Education Melbourne reviewing schools as part of the School Improvement process. I have also worked quite extensively as a consultant in Educational Leadership.

When I left Mercy, I was asked to become a Director of Mercy Education which governs schools owned by the Sisters of Mercy across the southern states. I have continued in this role and am now Deputy Chair of the Board. I very much enjoy the ongoing contact this enables with the Sisters of Mercy and their schools and continue to learn a great deal about schools operate effectively. Mercy College is an affiliate of Mercy Education and it is always a pleasure meeting with Mrs McInerney and other Mercy staff at functions.

It was a privilege to be part of the Mercy College story for 11 years. I read the college newsletter each fortnight and I am interested to see the activities and achievements of the students and the ways in which the college continues to grow. I hope the current students make the most of their opportunities at Mercy, to learn what it is to give and to receive, to participate in a range of activities which challenge and broaden them.

It is not just an academic education, but an education for life, and it is up to you to ensure you engage with it to the best of your ability.

Always hold your head high and be proud to be a Mercy Girl!

Liz Monahan July 2020

Thank you for sharing your connection with Mercy College and your inspirational reflection!