

**HISTORY OF EDUCATION
AT LORETO COLLEGE, COORPAROO**

3 August 2010

Mrs Moya Hickey

My claim to be able to speak about Loreto education over the years was based originally on what I heard from my mother who started school at Loreto Convent, Portland, Victoria in 1906. She went on from there to train as a teacher at the University of Melbourne and lived during her student days at St Mary's Hall, now St Mary's College, which was then and still is, conducted by the Loreto Sisters.

Mary Ward's life was governed strongly by the virtues of freedom, justice and sincerity, to which she added verity, which is truth, and felicity. The *Loreto Schools of Australia Mission Statement* is based on these virtues and they live on strongly in the schools. To quote: 'This is our vision: that Loreto schools offer a Catholic education which liberates, empowers and motivates students to use their individual gifts with confidence, creativity and generosity in loving and responsible service'.

There are two common themes which have permeated my life and which are echoed by a multitude of others: pastoral care or concern for the welfare of each individual and the inculcation of the conviction that any student has the potential to achieve in the area that interests her.

To be more specific about Loreto College Coorparoo, you may have heard or know personally, that when the Sisters came to Brisbane in 1928, they did not adopt the standard curriculum path which was current at that time. Students sat for an exam in Year 8 called 'Scholarship', which gave

them entry to secondary school and contribution towards the expense. The curriculum to that stage was limited to English, Mathematics, History and Geography. Having come from the south, the Sisters were accustomed to a broader range of subjects which they saw as a better path to follow. As a result, it took quite some time for Loreto to become an acceptable school in the eyes of Queensland parents. Gradually, however, the school grew, but it wasn't really until the nuns and students returned in 1943 after their sojourn in Glen Innes, that numbers increased significantly. Today there are 700 students.

As was the case in many girls' schools, no Science was taught until 1952. My own school in Hobart was the same and I revelled in the opportunity afforded to me by my time in Melbourne. In fact I ultimately earned a degree in Science and that was what I taught at first but later moved on to German and Religion.

The curriculum remained relatively stable for many years, although subjects like Music and Drama were formalised, rather than 'extras'. A significant change occurred in the early 70s with the introduction of school-based assessment.

Echoing that decision of the early Sisters not to follow the Scholarship path, in more recent times Loreto has resisted the widespread pressure to replace History and Geography with Social Studies. Current thinking, *e.g.* the new Australian curriculum, seems to be moving towards the original pattern, which is quite interesting. Further changes occurred over the years that followed, but a gradual introduction of new Authority subjects (as in Queensland Studies Authority) such as Physical Education, Information Processing and Technology and, more recently, Health Education has broadened the opportunities for students. In addition, there are now SAS (Study Area Specifications) courses in

Mathematics, Computing, Business, Art and Religion. The numbers taking part in SAT's (School-Based Apprenticeships and Training) have been steadily increasing, while other students have chosen to study a first-year university subject while completing Year 12.

To quote again from the Mission Statement: 'A vigorous belief in the capacity and responsibility of women to contribute significantly to society and to the Church underlies the emphasis in our tradition on the education of girls'. To illustrate this I thought I might try to give you some idea of where a Loreto education has led a variety of past pupils whose area of choice I happen to know.

Before I do this, however, I need to recognise all those past pupils who over the years have become dedicated teachers, nurses, religious (both Loreto Sisters and members of other orders) and so on, and all those other who work or have worked in the multitude of areas in which women are engaged.

Now to some whose names you might recognise:

Ann Lyons (O'Neil) - formerly the Chairperson of the Guardianship and Administration Tribunal, now a judge of the Queensland Supreme Court.

Robin Sullivan (Greeves) - formerly Commissioner for Children and Young People, now Director-General, Department of Child Safety.

Julie-Anne Schafer - former President of the RACQ and former Chairperson of the Queensland Law Society, now Commissioner of the National Transport Commission.

Dianne Reilly (Erdelyi) - Member for Mudgeeraba in the Queensland Parliament from 2003 until the last election.

Cheryl Hamilton (Fludder) – Principal of Loreto College

Marryatville, South Australia 2001-2010, who will become Principal of Loreto College Coorparoo in 2011.

Catherine Nance, recently elected Member of the World Council of Actuaries.

Melissa Mills and Gail Miller – members of the gold medal winning Women's Water Polo team at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney.

Jenny Cranston (Meehan) – Deputy Director General of Education Queensland 2004-2005.

Alice Anne Boylan (McRobbie) – former Director of the Museum of Brisbane, now Queensland Co-ordinator of the Open Gardens Scheme.

Aline Matta – specialist in International law, currently working in Beirut on the new Iraqi Constitution for the American Bar Association.

Catherine Cuthbert – barrister.

Anne Osborne – Queensland Rural Woman of the Year 2005 and commercial lawyer.

Anne Barry – chartered accountant with a flourishing business at Stones Corner.

Kathryn Mandla – formerly Director of the Office of Women, now Principal Policy Advisor, Commission for Children and Young People.

Helen Smith, Susan McRobbie and Helen Parer – architects.

Catherine Brouwer – landscape architect.

Veronica Gravalin – acrobatic gymnast for several years with Cirque du Soleil.

Rebecca Little – strategic engineer with Rio Tinto in Gladstone.

Juleen Blunt – mining engineer.

Judy Tso (Carroll) with her husband Augustine owns and manages Augustine's Restaurant in George Street, Brisbane.

Catherine Bremner – engineer with a Master's Degree from Oxford - Strategy Manager with the Carbon Trust in London, advising on carbon emission management, now back in Queensland.

And a range of medical women:

Jenny Byth (Partridge) – dermatologist.

Julie Lindstrom – gynaecologist.

Mary Cohn (Stewart) – Chair of the Medical Registration Board until recently.

Brigid Hickey – radiation oncologist.

Margaret Little – paediatric medical oncologist.

Katherine Stuart – gastroenterologist.

Susan O'Mahony – paediatric faciomaxillary surgeon.

Lesley Englhofer, Louise O'Dwyer, Julienne Sweeney and *Siobhan Tiernan* – general practitioners.

Nicoletta (Nicky) Muscillo, Antonina (Nina) Muscillo, Katrina Capelli (Salpietro) and *Sophie Koutsoukos* – pharmacists.

Julie Willems and *Mary Clarke* – physiotherapists.

Jenny Boxall (Robinson) and *Anne-Maree Johnson (Reilly)* – speech pathologists.

Some more interesting professions:

Elizabeth (Liz) Reilly and *Rachelle Keane* – police officers

Terri Hartley and *Robyn Hartley* – owners of Timbuktu clothing shops.

Karen Tso – television reporter in Sydney.

Leah Vandenberg – long time member of the Play School Team.

Angela Trabucco – production team member of TV ‘Australian Story’.

Melinda Butel – actress, stage and television.

Vanessa Ientile – forensic scientist.

Professor Pauline Allen – Director of the Centre for Early Christian Studies at ACU, Brisbane.

Veronica Tornabene, who with her husband Shadi, won the final of the television cooking contest, ‘My Kitchen Rules’.

And the ‘pièce de résistance’:

Melissa Ambrosini has been a dancer at the Moulin Rouge in Paris since 2007 and will now have a role in ‘Packed to the Rafters’.

Moya Hickey grew up in Hobart; but for the last three years of her schooling, went to Loreto Convent, Toorak, as a boarder.

After marrying a Queenslander she lived in Brisbane. The girls in her family followed in the scholastic footsteps of their mother and grandmother and attended Loreto College, Coorparoo. Moya joined the teaching staff and retired in 2002 after 34 years, for 22 of which she was Deputy Principal.

Two of her granddaughters have also been educated at Loreto Coorparoo.