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The adage – never too old to learn – is a great comfort to me.

Catherine McAuley

Dedication
This edition of Always Aloysius is dedicated to all past Principals, with particular dedications to Sr Helen Delaney, Sr Francis Baker, Sr Joan Thomas and Mr John Davidson.

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Cover Image: High Achievers of 2013

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As Principal of St Aloysius College, I am delighted to introduce you to the inaugural edition of the College’s publication *Always Aloysius*, which has in its focus the Alumni as well as our wider community.

This biannual publication is aimed at our alumni body, to ensure that every past student remains connected to the College, which was once such an integral part of their everyday life. As a College, we wish to remain in close contact with our alumni, highlighting their achievements and life milestones, as well as providing them with a regular update about the ongoing activities, stories and successes of their alma mater.

*Always Aloysius*, is also a publication for the wider community, showcasing their tremendous support for and involvement in all aspects of current life at St Aloysius College. From Primary Schools to local businesses, from Parishes to the Mercy Network, from professional bodies to volunteers, the College is fortunate to share its journey with so many others and, in a small but genuine way, this publication seeks to acknowledge that.

St Aloysius has achieved much in its 127-year history in North Melbourne and publication of *Always Aloysius* marks yet another exciting development on that journey. If institutions are in reality human beings united in a common cause, then St Aloysius is the epitome of an excellent institution, an institution that now contains in excess of five thousand alumni. These five thousand people are not merely linked by their presence in the same buildings some years past but are fundamentally joined by the Mercy values that permeate their actions. A St Aloysius education is a Mercy education, and the alumni are part of a much greater story. These five thousand also share the legacy of past Principals – most recently Sr Helen, Sr Frances, Sr Joan and Mr John Davidson – to whom the College owes a great debt and to whom this inaugural edition of *Always Aloysius* is most humbly dedicated.

Over the past year and a half I have been interested in learning the essence of the St Aloysius Girl. I am inspired by the very essence of the St Aloysius Girl who shares her exciting ideas with confidence and grace and who will explore the wonderfully varied opportunities of life with courage and curiosity.

The breadth and richness of opportunities in Student Learning, Mission and Wellbeing ensure that the young women of St Aloysius will be compassionate, articulate women, always showing a commitment to the values central to Christian heritage and able to make a difference in their worlds. The young women of this College are challenged to think as global citizens, consider the needs of those beyond their local community and recognise the responsibilities their education places on them as they take their places in work, social and family networks of the 21st century.

In the footsteps of Catherine McAuley,

Mary Farah
Principal
The Next Chapter...

Mission Statement

Our Vision
Our Vision is to build a highly creative, student-centred learning community where individual needs are met and where the inspiration to personal excellence is integral to everything we do. We aspire to be a compassionate and just community, nourished by the teachings of Jesus Christ, sustained by the Catholic Church and inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy.

Our Values
Inspired by the charism of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy, our Values are expressed by:
- Living Faithfully, placing God at the heart of all that we do;
- Living with Integrity, so that it lies at the heart of all we say and do;
- Being Honest, so that we are truthful to ourselves and to others;
- Showing Respect, so that we value ourselves and others, appreciating our similarities and celebrating our uniqueness;
- Being Courageous, to do what’s right no matter how challenging;
- Taking Responsibility, to be sensible, reliable and accountable;
- Honouring the contributions of our past, so that it becomes a catalyst for embracing a bright and hope-filled future;
- Creating a Nurturing and Welcoming environment that celebrates diversity and personal achievement;
- Being of Service to others, through our unity and solidarity with those who are marginalised or disadvantaged.

From the Advisory Council
It is fitting that the first edition of Always Aloysius comes so quickly after the school community launched its renewed College Crest and Mission Statement.

It continues the College’s commitment to renew all aspects of the College to ensure it delivers high quality learning outcomes and continues to improve the way it communicates and engages with its staff, students, parents and the wider community.

The implementation of the School Improvement Plan is progressing well, with the emphasis on staff and on providing them with the tools and resources to improve student outcomes.

The College refurbishment program to modernise our facilities is well underway with the recent completion the Year 7 Centre. We have a number of new projects about to commence to make the College an even more vibrant place for learning.

Our marketing drive and increased community involvement have been incredibly successful in making St Aloysius a preferred school of choice. This is reflected in the significant increase in Year 7 enrolments next year.

We should be extremely proud of the contributions from staff and students in making St Aloysius a vibrant learning community.

Rick Wight
Chairperson, Advisory Council
Head of Students and Programs

As the newly appointed Head of Students and Programs at St Aloysius College, it is both an honour and a privilege to be asked to formally introduce myself in this, the very first issue of Always Aloysius.

I feel truly blessed to have had a career in girls’ education spanning almost 25 years. My first teaching appointment was at Ave Maria College, Aberfeldie, where I was on staff for 16 years. During this time, I taught English and Drama and I held a number of leadership roles.

A defining moment for me was when I was appointed Year 12 Level Co-ordinator, as this helped me to understand the positive difference that can be made when the wellbeing of girls is central to the teaching and learning policies, practices and the decision making that happens in a girls’ school. The importance of building relationships and treasuring each encounter with others, certainly continues to underpin my educational philosophy and my leadership style.

Over my time both at Ave Maria College and later on at Sacré Coeur, Glen Iris, I have enjoyed working with many girls and co-ordinating each year level from 7–12. For me, one of the joys of leadership is the opportunity to continue learning, and I’m certainly a strong believer that learning is life-long and life-giving. In addition to a commitment to ongoing professional development, I have also completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Education – Student Welfare and a Master of Education at the University of Melbourne.

Outside of school, I enjoy running and whenever time permits I love getting lost in a great book. I have been happily married to Anthony for almost 20 years and we are blessed to have a wonderful daughter, Maddison, who is in Year 9.

I am absolutely thrilled to be a part of the St Aloysius community and I am very excited about my new role and the opportunity to work with staff, students and their families.

Pauline Cutajar
Head of Students and Programs
Alumna, Alumnus, Alumnae or Alumni?

The rich history of St Aloysius College results in individual past students being referred to as ‘alumna’ or ‘alumnus’ according to one’s gender. St Aloysius College commenced as a co-educational primary school that subsequently extended its year levels, and eventually became a girls’ college.

It is anticipated that from time to time the following terms will be used in the Always Aloysius publication:

- Alumna – single female graduate
- Alumnae – plural female graduates
- Alumnus – single male graduate
- Alumni – plural male graduates
- Alumni – plural female and male graduates

This photograph is provided by Mr Len Case of Seaholme. Len is standing on the left side of the group after taking the sacrament of Communion in 1955.

Elaine Kent
Archivist and Alumni Liaison
In Memoriam

Elsbeth May Norden (nee McDonald)

The Principal and the community of St Aloysius College extended their sincere condolences to the family of our alumna Elsbeth May Norden (nee McDonald) who passed away on the 26 January after a short illness. Mrs Norden was about to celebrate her 104th birthday. She had worked tirelessly for many years supporting the community of St Brendan’s Catholic Church, Flemington, and she had reared her family and fostered many children over the years. In 2012 she attended the St Aloysius 125 years celebrations and was recognised as the oldest past student of the College. St Aloysius College was represented by the College Captains, Maddie Burns and Christine Eid, at the Requiem Mass celebrating Mrs Norden’s life.

Mrs Norden celebrated the 125th Anniversary of St Aloysius College and is pictured here with Mr John Davidson, Principal of St Aloysius College 2003–2012.

St Aloysius Alumni Reunion

The College Alumni is invited to light lunch and drinks on Saturday 30 August, 1.00pm to 3.30pm
Principal’s Address at 1.45pm
Re-Launch of St Aloysius Past Students’ Association
Tour of the College

Save the Day
RSVP 25 August for catering purposes to Elaine Kent, Archivist and Alumni Liaison
kente@alloysius.vic.edu.au
It is hard to believe that I am now considered a past pupil at this wonderful school, especially when I still mistakenly wake up thinking that I am a high school student, ready for a full day of classes. But such was the familiarity and comfort that came with being a part of a tight knit community at St Al’s, that it was hard to let go all the routines that I had grown to be accustomed to. My high school experience, the whole six years of it, was truly enjoyable. While I may not have thought this during the stressful times or in those early mornings, it was the people at St Al’s who made it unforgettable. The Class of 2013 will always have a special place in my heart, with many of us having made life-long friendships. I am also thankful to all of the teachers and staff who we’ve had throughout the years. The support and care that they’ve given us was incredible, and we will always be grateful for their unwavering commitment and dedication.

It is always a humbling experience when you are recognised for your achievements. The best advice I can muster would be to know yourself and know what works best for you. Having a good understanding of your personal study habits will help make the most of your time. I have always valued the benefits of having a good balance in your life. “Work hard and play hard” is always the mantra I try to live by. So while I tried to maintain participating in the activities I enjoyed, my final year of high school was truly rewarding because I knew that it was necessary to put in the effort to reach my goals.

Now in my first year at Melbourne University studying for a Bachelor of Commerce, it is very exciting to be pursuing my passion in economics. It has been a smooth transition where I am very much enjoying the “uni life” – and all the freedoms that come with it! I also hope to study abroad and make the most of all opportunities that can come with an education. But wherever my studies take me, you can be sure that I will always regard myself as a proud St Al’s Gal!

Sally Tran
2013

Year 12 VCE High Achievers – 2013
Rear (L to R): Mikaela Glennon, Nikita Castellano, Lucretia Chan, Danica Sem, Nancy Comperatore.
Front: Jessica Ruasol, Romina Favero, Sally Tran, Mary Farah (Principal), Jessica Au, Cindy Lay and Shirley Jiang.
I graduated from St Aloysius College in 2011, which still feels very surreal. What’s even more surreal is that this year I will be wrapping up my Arts degree at the University of Melbourne, and next March I will graduate with a double major in Ancient Worlds as well as English and Theatre Studies.

In all honesty I don’t think I would have made it to the University of Melbourne without St Al’s, and I don’t think I could have made it through this degree without the base my high school gave me. When you arrive at university it seems so vast; there’s so many different people you meet, all with their own stories, their own backgrounds and their own journeys. When people asked me during those first few weeks what high school I’d come from, and I’d answer proudly with “St Al’s in North Melbourne”, there was no stigma attached. Quite a few people didn’t know about my little Catholic school a few blocks down from where my university is, and I was so happy to tell them all about it.

About our school camps to Torquay, our exchange students, our history, excitedly explaining about my involvement with the school’s 125th Anniversary (2012), and most of all, getting to tell my stories about my wonderful teachers and the beautiful girls I’d met.

No matter whom I spoke to, no one seemed to have had the same bond with their year level as I did. Few students heard from their VCE teachers when the ATAR results were released, and fewer still have contact with their school today.

Coming from St Al’s also meant I had a strength in me that hasn’t been shaken; compassion, mercy, social justice and being the confident young woman I was encouraged to be. My first few lessons looking at feminism were no surprise; of course girls could do what boys could, of course girls were just as capable, of course girls deserved education – I’d seen all of this every day at school. I’d seen girls achieving things I couldn’t believe; I’d watched our school community raise money for very worthy causes, I’d sung with choir at aged care facilities and at Hamer Hall, I’d had lunch with the Archbishop, and I’d had the absolute honour of studying alongside Mollie Burns, who came out with an ATAR of above 98 and is currently studying on the Chancellor’s Scholarship at Monash.

Women achieving great results and pushing themselves to succeed was second nature to me.

This year I’ve taken on a mentor position with the university – whilst I’ve returned to St Al’s these last few years as an ambassador for the University of Melbourne, this role has been very different. I run study sessions as a peer leader, and part of the reason I was so, so excited to take this on was because I remembered working with my teachers

St Aloysius has influenced me in so many ways that I didn’t fully realise it until I sat down to write this article.
and fellow students during Years 11 and 12. I can’t begin to imagine trying to complete VCE – never mind a university second year subject – without such wonderful support. And I really wanted to help people! Every week when I walk into my room and start scribbling on the white board, I can’t wait to talk, to answer questions, to brainstorm, and to see my fellow students lighting up as they begin to understand, or think more deeply.

I’m currently working in retail in the city, and I can’t help but beam each time a St Al’s girl walks in – the uniform is still so familiar to me that I have to remind myself these girls might be too young to remember me wandering around the halls and the cafeteria with them. Working in the fashion game can be a little brutal – long hours, a lot of stock to manage, a lot of people to meet and greet, and being in the city means it’s go-go-go morning to night. I’ve found that all of the work we did around identity and body image as a part of the Year 9 program still sits at the back of my mind as I style and accessorise women and girls of every age. My goal, always, is to make them feel beautiful and valued for the gorgeous individuals they are – the same way all of my teachers made sure we felt heard and understood in all of our lessons.

I still see my best friends from St Al’s as often as we can all manage it – and each time we see each other it’s almost like we never left. We revert almost instantly back to giggling teenagers (none of us are teens anymore!) instantly, and the inside jokes we made in the common room at lunch time still get us snickering. The bonds we formed almost eight years ago are still strong, and I’m so, so grateful that we were all St Al’s girls together.

I’ve returned to the school a couple of times these last few years, as an ambassador, for Past Pupil reunions, with family friends on Open Day, and to watch the absolutely fantastic production of The Sound of Music last year. Whilst the school is changing – new chairs, new paint, different fences, different faces – each time I walk through those gates I still feel like I’m coming home.

Saint Aloysius has influenced me in so many ways that I didn’t fully realise it until I sat down to write this article. Some of the biggest decisions I’ve made in the last three years have come from the faith and hope I learnt at St Al’s. Faith not only in the universe and whatever it may have planned for me, but faith in myself, and hope that wherever I go from here, whether it be teaching or law, or pursuing my love of ancient culture, I will be able to help people in some way and make a difference in their lives. And, of course, I have never stopped striving for higher things, and I don’t plan to!

Dr. Jennifer Cooke (Alumna 1979–84)
Acting Director of Cardiology, Box Hill Hospital

Jennifer Cooke has maintained links with St Aloysius College, giving truth to the statement of so many past students, “Once a St Al’s girl, always a St Al’s girl”. Jennifer was school Vice-Captain in 1984 and went on to study medicine from which she graduated in 1990. Jennifer and I met for a chat over lunch, and I came away absolutely inspired and enlivened by the life she has led. Giving service to others, whilst deeply developing and extending the areas of medicine in which she has practised, provides one aspect to Jennifer’s life, along with her love of life, living it to the fullest and a sense of humour.

After graduation, Jennifer worked as a junior doctor in hospitals for seven years whilst completing her physician training and specialist training as a general cardiologist. She received her Consultant Letters in 1998 and then sub-specialised in echocardiography (Cardiac ultrasound), completing Fellowship periods in Melbourne, and then in London from 1999 to 2000. From London she was appointed Director of the Cardiac Unit at the Mater Hospital in Brisbane for five and a half years, run by the Sisters of Mercy. It was there that she worked closely with Sr Regis RSM, and whenever she returns to Brisbane she always makes a point of arranging a catch up. Jennifer remembers her time at the Mater as specifically strengthening her valued links with the Sisters of Mercy. After being away from Melbourne for seven years, Jennifer returned in 2006 to take up the position of Director of Echo at Box Hill Hospital. She prefers to practise as a full-time public hospital specialist (which is uncommon in Cardiology specialisation), based on her belief that healthcare should not be dependent on patients’ financial capacity. This is a sentiment with which the Mercy Sisters would concur. A favourite adage is “What we do in life echoes in eternity.”
Jennifer is currently Acting Director of Cardiology at Box Hill Hospital and is presently overseeing the fit-out of the cardiology department in the new Box Hill Hospital (opening in August) and installation of the new cardiac cath lab where the team urgently unblocks arteries of the patient’s heart during a heart attack. The role that Jennifer presently holds embraces a mix of clinical practice, procedural activities, teaching and administrative leadership, and is supported by her Diploma of Management. She frequently instructs medical students and junior doctors and is well equipped in this field due to her specialisation, extensive experience, her leadership roles and the Graduate Certificate in Health Professional Education which she has completed. Always a student!

Jennifer’s other professional interests are teaching and implementing quality improvement programs for specialist medics. She sits on two national committees that oversee the training of all junior cardiologists in Victoria and Tasmania, and helps set standards for specialist cardiologists nationwide.

Apart from Jennifer’s passion for her work, she also is a committed traveller. She attributes her love of travel to when she was in Year 8 at St Al’s. She and her mother visited Ireland and then travelled for twenty-two days through eleven European countries on a Eurorail pass. This was a significant point in a young girl’s life. Jennifer recalls the experience of recognising change in herself and acquiring a sense of maturity. She realised that seeing the world is a powerful teacher and still holds that view today. She reflects on the difference between being a traveller who experiences geography, history, language, culture and humanity, where there is a shared human experience, and the alternative tourist experience of having mainly snapshots to remember.

When travelling, Jennifer prefers independent travel or small groups of no more than fifteen in the party and to travel mainly by public transport so that one may “experience the local life”. In June, Jennifer travelled to Morocco, making it the sixtieth country she has visited. A lesson she takes from her travels, which she recognises in her clinical practices, is that of her patients in a foreign environment with limited knowledge of the language spoken. She is careful to ensure her patients are well informed and comfortable, just as she is sure that they appreciate this approach from her.

Jennifer’s advice to young people is to travel so as to allow them to realise the world is bigger than the immediate issues they may be facing. Discussion turned to memories of St Aloysius. Jennifer remembers much about her time at St Al’s and, apart from the time she enjoyed with her friends, she particularly remembers her teachers and to this day values those who role modelled leadership and compassion.

In closing, a statement of St Augustine which Jennifer often quotes is: ‘The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page’.

Kathleen Pleasants (Alumna 1980–85)  
Lecturer, Outdoor and Environmental Studies, La Trobe University

Kathleen Pleasants attended St Aloysius College from 1980 to 1985. Known as Kathie at school, she attended St Al’s with her two sisters, Elizabeth and Sara. Kathleen had attended St Mary’s Primary School, Ascot Vale, and because she was the eldest girl in the family, it was a natural progression to St Aloysius.

‘The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page’.
Kathleen remembers her teachers fondly, particularly Christine Miller (nee O’Connor) whom she had for English in Years 10, 11 and 12. She remembers Christine as a committed teacher whose lessons were always engaging. Kathleen recalls that Christine recognised teaching to be relevant to the development of all aspects of the person; she connected to the different personalities of her students and contributed to the formation of respectful relationships. She wasn’t prepared to accept a vague or uncommitted response and would probe the student, providing opportunities to develop responses and understanding.

Kathleen completed HSC in 1985, as she admits “without trying hard” – which she now says she regrets – and experienced only limited success. Year 12 was spent making the most of the subjects she enjoyed and facing the challenge of successfully completing Applied Mathematics. She is pleased that she had the good sense to stop doing Chemistry and Physics at the end of Year 11, and considers that today’s focus on study skills in the middle years can help students understand their strengths and pursue appropriate pathways.

In Year 12 Kathleen completed Outdoor Education, which was taught by Leonie Charles and Annette Diver. Some of the expeditions included bushwalking, cross country skiing and wind surfing. This consolidated Kathleen’s interest in outdoor activities and reinforced her aspiration to become a Park Ranger, which had been the focus of her work experience at the Organ Pipes National Park near Diggers Rest. That goal was eventually achieved in 1996.

After Year 12, Kathleen attended Footscray Institute of Technology where she completed a Bachelor of Applied Science, majoring in Mathematics and Computing. She was President of the SRC and Chair of the Student Union. She went on to complete a Diploma of Education and taught in Australia and overseas. In 1993 she worked in an Outdoor Education Program in the US, which reinforced her belief that there are a variety of ways to connect to students and engage their interest in learning.

On her return to Australia, Kathleen made contact with the Department of Outdoor Education at La Trobe University, Bendigo. She had been aware of their program during Year 12 but admits, “I never thought I could do something like that.” In 1995 she moved to Bendigo and completed a Graduate Diploma in Outdoor Education, rekindling her love of the outdoors and coincidentally also meeting her future partner, then a fellow student. Nineteen years down the track, her husband, Dr Alistair Stewart, is the Head of the Outdoor and Environmental Studies at La Trobe University.

After graduating, Kathleen taught Outdoor Education and Mathematics in Tasmania before moving back to central Victoria. While Kathleen was teaching at Kyabram Secondary College, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority invited her to join a review panel for VCE Outdoor Education and contribute to the first textbook for the new VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies course. She went on to write other curriculum, support and assessment materials, and was the Chief Examiner for the subject for eight years. She is very grateful to the leadership team at Kyabram for allowing her to embrace these opportunities, which she says made her a better, more informed, teacher.

In 2004, when her daughter, Mathilda, was one, Kathleen began sessional tutoring at La Trobe and, in 2005, successfully applied for a Teaching Fellowship. During the next two years, she taught at the University part time whilst undertaking her Masters and preparing for the birth of her second child, Sebastian. In 2012 Kathleen was awarded a David Myers Scholarship by La Trobe University to undertake her PhD. The scholarship (named after the first Vice Chancellor of the University) is awarded to the most highly ranked PhD applicant in each Faculty.

Kathleen feels fortunate that her personal and professional lives intersect in her love of the outdoors – nurtured, she says, by family camping holidays and her experiences in Outdoor Education at St Aloysius – the unequivocal support offered by her parents when she was finding her way, and the encouragement of her partner, Alistair. Her advice to young women is: “Remember that the decisions you make at school, and at the end of Year 12, do not have to limit your life. They are just part of the journey, there are many ways to get where you want to go and sometimes your destination changes.” When she was in Year 12, Kathleen says she “would never have dreamt of applying to study Outdoor Education at uni – it was just too unattainable – now I’m lecturing there!”

Kathleen says: “You really do have to have faith in yourself to reach the goals that you might think at first are not possible. Believe in yourself and your support networks. You can make things happen.” She believes strongly in the resilience reflected in the College motto, Ad Altiora.
Securing our Future by building upon our Past

One of the most significant developments this year at St Aloysius College has been the redevelopment of our Year 7 area, which was officially blessed by Father Max Vodola on 30 April. The Year 7 renovation will re-define education and classroom practice for years to come and forms part of a greater vision to create a unique learning experience for our students. Symbolically, this renewal reinvigorates the College’s heritage whilst investing enormous faith in the future.

In designing and developing this learning space we were guided by various factors. We wanted to create an environment that provides the opportunity for student collaboration which exemplifies the very best design of learning environments for girls in the 21st century. With plentiful use of natural light, refurbished break-out spaces and enhanced learning technologies.

Project Architect Ezio Costa from ClarkeHopkinsClarke said “We were working with an existing 1960s’ building, and the place was dull and uninspiring, lacked natural light and contained finishes from another era.” He is now pleased to have fulfilled our brief, creating an attractive and contemporary light-filled centre with a series of flexible learning and teaching spaces. This area is now a vibrant hub for learning and student engagement.
Strive for Higher Things