



A PUBLICATION
OF THE ALUMNI OF
WAGGA TEACHERS

WWTC TALKABOUT



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The Finale A Handsome Way to Close the Chapter



The pleasing Alumni attendees at the Special Meeting at Federation House on Tuesday August 12 2025. Janet & Graham Wright, Grahame & Fay Keast, Andrew Newman, Lyn Luke, John Roberts, Ray Griffiths, Lindsay Brockway, Brian Bazzo, Graham & Margaret Brown, Marion Greene, Winifred Wilcox, Bruce & Lesley Forbes, Chris & Jenny Blake, Allan & Welwyn Petersen, John Dawson, Bruce & Cecily Chittick, Helen Laidlaw, Robin Henze, (Margot Phillips had left earlier)

Under Part 6 -Miscellaneous Item 8 Dissolution

- a) The Alumni shall be dissolved in the event of membership of less than three (3) persons or upon the vote of a 75% majority of members present at a special general meeting convened to consider such question.*
- b) Upon a resolution being passed in accordance with paragraph (a) of this rule, all assets and funds of the Alumni on hand shall, after the payment of all expenses and liabilities, be handed over to the Charles Sturt Foundation.*

President's Report

Bruce Forbes (1965-66)

And with this motion being put and an unanimous show of hands, the Alumni is now formally closed, with this being the final *Talkabout*.

Historical Perspective

The Wagga Wagga Teachers Alumni Association formed in 1997 as a result of a fifty-year Reunion of the 1947 Pioneers. The first postgraduate *Talkabout* was printed and distributed in December 1997. From this emerged an ideal to **Keep the Spirit Alive** and establish a scholarship fund for chosen students from rural areas to complete a degree in teaching at Charles Sturt University. By July 1998 ninety-seven people had donated \$2505 to the Pioneers of WWTAA and a target was set to attain \$25,000 by 2002. The rate of growth of membership and contributions was achieved through the super sleuth work of Ann Smith. Over \$28,000 was held by the Association and three copies of *Talkabout* were produced each year. An anomaly was the fact that there were over 3,500 graduates as members but less than 40% had contributed to the Membership or Scholarship Fund.

At this stage printing costs were over \$1,500 per edition plus postage costs of 45 cents/letter. It was described as a **Double Whammy** by the executive committee of Bob Collard OAM, Ann Smith, Lindsay Budd, Lew Morrell and John Riley. The first WWTAA scholarship was awarded at the CSU Campus in Wagga 2002 to Ingrid Jones in her fourth year and the scholarship fund had reached \$28,000.

By 2009 there was the inevitable doubt as identified by the *Talkabout* lead article: **To Whom Will We Pass the Baton?** In March 2010 the WWTAA Committee identified that it had become a **Shag on a Rock** as issues surrounded the establishment and naming of **WATL House** at CSU Boorooma Cam-

pus as the University Council exercised its jurisdiction on building and development. This jurisdiction still extends today and has limited and thwarted various projects which would reflect our legacy. Items such as the *Dame Mary Gilmore Gates* and the 1947 Advanced Math's Group Sun Dial are firmly ensconced at South Campus along with two plaques indicating WWTC former existence.

Volume 14 No.1, the 40th edition of *Talkabout* in March 2011 identified that WWTAA had reached the cross-roads as costs were greater than payments received or simply, people were not paying. The scholarship fund was closed at \$60,000. It was proposed that to **Secure the Future**, the scholarship would be set at \$6,000 per year. There was an additional \$11,423 available for distribution. In the same year there was a proposal from the CSU Development Officer that the Association, known as WWTAA comprise all graduates of WWTC, RCAE, RMIHE and CSU and be invited to 'join our ranks.'

By November 2011, *Talkabout* was headed with the question **Is it the End of the Road?**

The committee pushed on but with some doubt and by March, 2013 the heading, with a colour photo of the Pioneering Committee read **Goodbye, Farewell and Amen.** These stalwarts/pioneers/founders namely, Bob Collard, John Riley, Graeme Wilson, Nigel Tanner, Phil Bastick, Lindsay Budd, Kevin Wilcox, Winifred Wilcox, Malcolm Hanratty, Ann Smith, Lew Morrell, and Dorothy Tanner had decided to call time.

But wait! An alumni special meeting was called for 14th May 2013. **It may be the last** it read. It so happened that Lesley and I had attended the meeting on 14/08/2012 and were welcomed as the *young whippersnappers* (quote Mal Hanratty). At the next meeting in May an interim commit-

tee was formed for the AGM in August 2013 when a new committee was formed. The heading became: **Re-prieve for the Alumni Association.** Since 2013 the committee has continued the operations of WWTAA under the banner of WWTCAA with the membership strictly limited to graduates and students from Wagga Wagga Teachers College for all the obvious reasons. Our Constitution, with valuable input from Col Kohlhagen, was updated and adopted.

Perhaps the most significant event has been the seventy-year reunion in 2017 at Wagga Wagga South campus and CSU Boorooma. This incorporated a Civic Welcome, a nostalgic visit to South Campus, a BBQ lunch and a walk down memory lane at CSU with your year cohort and a formal dinner. *Talkabout* is now up to its 28th volume with presently 938 forwarded by email and 241 hard copies through the post. These numbers have obviously diminished over time and help identify our use-by date. Besides the natural attrition rate, it has been through email and the free printing from Abbotsleigh School that costs have been reduced for the distribution of copies.

With regards to the WWTCAA Scholarship the target is to achieve a balance of \$168,000 in the CSU Foundation Trust Account upon our closure. This will maintain a WWTCAA Scholarship of \$10000 pa in perpetuity. When you reflect on this you can appreciate our fortunate student days. Our funds support up to two students for a scholarship in one year only yet there were over 3000 graduates from WWTC who had a scholarship, were fed and housed.

Your Association has also made significant contributions to Stewart House, the Abbotsleigh Indigenous Foundation (off-setting printing costs), CSURA (Archives) which is now located at Boorooma where funds have gone to a de-humidifier and digitizing of WWTC material, the GO Foundation,

and schools in need following flood and fire disasters (Eugowra and Bobin). *Talkabout* and the data base, have been the conduit to link our members and allow various year groups to establish time and place for a reunion or small gatherings. To all those members who have made financial contributions and -67), written those articles about College life, and Allan and Welwyn Petersen appointments and beyond, please accept your committee's thanks. All *Talkabouts* since December 1997 can be downloaded and viewed by googling website *alumni.csu.edu.au*. A mailout upon download it on your phone or laptop.

There are people and organisations to thank besides all those who have made contributions to *Talkabout*. You cannot operate without a committee and at our last meeting in February we were only a group of six. It was at this meeting the decision was made to call TIME. Like the pioneers of 1947, the inevitable has arrived and strangely there are no young whippersnappers left. The present Association's committee has

been operating since 2013. As president I must thank your members who took up the challenges and performed the committee tasks that have kept WWTCAA a viable and valuable organization for all members.

Several of our original committee are now deceased. Since 2013 the following alumni have been involved with creating and performing committee tasks. Brian Powyer dec. (66/67) was the *Talkabout* editor, Bob Haskew (60/61) pur-

sued Archives, Col Kohlhagen (1960-61) instrumental in constitutional matters and the best person for tocol, Dorothy (1948-50) and Nigel Tanner, (history), Kevin (dec) and Winifred Wilcox (1947-48) (pioneers and college history), Lyn Luke (1966-67), Norm Stanton (dec.) (1964-65)

written those articles about College life, and Allan and Welwyn Petersen (1957-58) with archive knowledge.

All these members have made decisions on behalf of the alumni. There

is also a Wagga connection called website *alumni.csu.edu.au*. A mailout upon download it on your phone or laptop. There are people and organisations to thank besides all those who have made contributions to *Talkabout*. You cannot

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Lesley Forbes Secretary and *Talkabout* Editor: Lesley took up the huge task of receiving and editing committee material to produce *Talkabout* following the sudden passing of Brian Powyer in 2017. She also has

maintained the database records of membership and handled all written and verbal correspondence from members.

Lindsay Brockway Treasurer:

besides his resolute attention to finance when he adopted the Treasurer's role, with the help of his wife Sue, he was a sub editor of *Talkabout*. His astute bookkeeping always kept the committee well informed of the treasury and the distribution of funds on an annual basis. The donation data base was maintained between Lindsay and Lesley.

Chris and Jenny Blake Scholarship Selection: took on the extensive role involved with scholarship selection. This included vetting the applications, selecting possible candidates and working with CSU's Stacey Fish to interview possible recipients. They have travelled to each, and every Scholarship presentation be it in Wagga, Albury or Port Macquarie. They even follow up with going on trips to the scholarship holders' school and corresponding with recipients after appointments.

Stacey Fish CSU Liaison, Development Officer Advancement Unit: Stacey has been the main conduit between our association and CSU. As a sounding board she has been there for us and is so able and willing to assist with the protocols for dealing with our relationship with CSU.

Apologies for inability to attend Special Meeting and expressions of thanks received from:

Sue Truin (Rankin 1965-66), Roslyn Broom (McIlvray 1960-61), Yvonne Stapleton (Leah 1965-66), Pamela James (Northey 1955-56), Tony Foster (1965-66), Alan Hayes (1966-67), Judy Benson (1960-61), Olga Collard (Taylor 1948-50), Dorothy Green (Keefe 1965-66), Pat Carr (1956-57), Kay Toohey (Winter 1961-62), Elizabeth Jones (McIntyre 1963-64), Garry Funnell (1967-68), Diane Grocott (Carlin 1968-69), Helen Watson (Cumes 1969-70), Bev Elliott (Stockley 1970-71), Helen Musgrove (McDonald 1965-65), Sue Hazel (Perry 1966-67), Trevor Black (1965-66), Pam Harris (Abberton 1957-58), Laurence Lepherd (1958-59), Jessie Glover (Segal 1955-56), Albert Foggett (1953-54), Bill Frost (1964-65), Kathleen Sneddon (Thompson 1960-61), Lyn Megarry (Judd 1964-65), Tony Sherlock (1962-63), Kevin Hennessy (1955-56), Bronwyn Patrick (Chivers 1966-67), Dinah Walker (1962-64), Ian Stevenson (1970-71), Trevor and Bev McGregor (1968-69), Margaret Ham (Gallagher 1965-66), Patricia Buchanan (O'Brien 1959-60), Heather McLaren (1966-67), Rae Hussey (Townsend 1963-64), Keith and Lyn Solomon (Stephenson 1956-57), Betty McGrath (Doherty 1951-52), Patricia Spaul (Miller 1961-62), Bill Keast (1960-61), Gerard Say (1963-64), Elaine Armstrong (Etherington 1960-61), Maggie Harris (Ward 1966-67), Margaret Walsh (Turnbull 1965-66), Dawn Sale Jakes (1961-62), Cathy Delves (Coles 1966-67), Marion Bourke (Thompson 1959-60), June Granziera (Legge 1952-53), Cheryl Hanly (Dawe 1965-66), Wendy and Keith Lambert (Michie 1962-64), Ronella Stuart (Sneddon 1960-61), Gwen Barnett (Delofski 1959-60), Robert Jackson (1966-67), David and Helen Crosweller (Young 1962-64), Graeme Wilson (1949-50), Greg & Dot Ponchard (Steele 1963-66), Christine McSeveny (Savery 1960-61)

The Two of Us

Helen Laidlaw (Jordan 1956-57)

Helen: Robin and I met at Wagga. We met at Wagga Teachers' College in 1957. Robin was from Cootamundra, and she knew my mother's family; my cousin Bruce Ward was in her class at High School. We were both housed in Kambu dormitories so were always able to organise tennis games and trips to the local pool for a swim. I had an operation for appendicitis just before Easter 1958 so was unable to travel home. Robin's mother offered that I go to her home to recuperate. I accepted with delight. I came from a strict Methodist family (no alcohol) so was impressed by the family ritual of a brandy and dry crusta before dinner each evening in the living room!

Robin was sent to Dareton to teach and I was in Sydney at Glebe, but we kept in touch. By 1961 we were both teaching in Wollongong and went on several trips together, the most memorable to Queensland travelling in a group of six teachers all squashed in one car. We hired a rowboat near Stradbroke Island and had to be rescued when the tide turned and we were being washed

out to sea.

We both married in 1962 and Robin and Owen bought a house at Balgownie in 1963. While I lived in many places she has settled there always. When we were back in Wollongong from 1969-1974, Robin and I played squash against each other. We each had produced three children, a son followed by two daughters between 1965 and 1970. After living in Canberra, Fiji and Tasmania, Jack and I moved to Sydney in 1990 and when I had a non-working day, Robin would travel to Sydney and we'd explore the many historic areas, take ferry trips and hike around the Harbour.

Robin taught swimming for the Department of Education in Wollongong from 1975-1995.

She has been swimming Masters races in Australia, but also overseas, in Casablanca, Morocco in June 1998 and in Christchurch, New Zealand in April 2002. She has held Australian records in breaststroke and freestyle. My favourite headline came in the *Wollongong Mercury*: *Our Robin Comes Home before*

Dawn. She'd beaten Dawn Fraser in a race in 1989. Robin insisted that Dawn was just unfit.

Robin was named in the FINA top 10 in the world in 2019. However she is always modest. Robin still swims three times a week. Also she is part of a Dementia Carers' Group to help others cope.

Eventually my husband and I moved to Kiama, so it was easy for us to visit each other.

When Robin's husband developed Lewy Body dementia, I was impressed with her ability to deal with the increasing symptoms and later her dedication in travelling many kilometres to feed him while in care. He died in 2020. Meanwhile I was having my own stresses with my husband's depression, which finally led to a divorce in 2020. When things became too difficult I was able to stay with Robin for five weeks in 2018 which allowed me time to rally!

We still holiday together, lunch out and go to concerts. She has been my rock in hard times.

A Life Well Lived—Kerry McNicol (Target 1960-61)

Jane Sullivan (McNicol -Daughter)

At 16, Kerry was so excited to be on a new adventure and I always thought she was brave to leave home at 16. I loved hearing stories of her college life over the years and stories added to stories by many of her close friends – Helen Ferguson, Gwenda Starling, Elaine Etherington, Georgina Wood-Davies, Kerry Hyde, Adele Bolton. These wonderful women became part of our lives as kids of Kerry. They were like aunties to us. There were always some naughty giggles and smiles to go with them.

Kerry felt freedom and loved her time in Wagga. She loved the country life and how different it was from Sydney where she grew up. She retained that connection by often visiting from then on.

Kerry had no regrets in life. She was proud of her time as an infants teacher and always had a connection to little children. Her first Kinder class had 44 students. She learned a lot in those early years which was excellent grounding for what was to come. She spent time at schools in Herne Bay, Kingsgrove, North Sydney Demonstration, Oatley West and Connells Point.

Kerry married in 1965 and with her husband, Bruce lived in Illawong where they raised four children. They were a big part of the Illawong community and were always involved in their children's activities, education and sport.

Kerry saw a desperate need for ear-

ly education in the area and set up *Jimmalong*, the first pre-school in Illawong. We were so proud of her achievements and her dedication astounds me.

The family enjoyed camping holidays with friends and later, Kerry and Bruce travelled overseas, including a visit to Peru where their first granddaughter was born. After Bruce passed away in 2005, Kerry continued to travel.

Kerry's years from 2014 were on the Central Coast near her daughter, Carla and her family. Kerry passed away in January 2025, after failing to recover from a bad fall. She had lived a full and beautiful life.

Across the Secretary's Desk - Lesley Forbes



John Roberts (1964-65) Thanks. I read the red... and everything else. Interesting article by Alan McSeveny. He was in the room next to us in Kabi(1964). I never realised that the men's dorms were separated into primary and junior secondary. Thus when he joined Jun Sec Maths after some dropped out he was the only J Sec in our dorm. What he mentioned about initiation by the '63 group on the 64's was pretty nasty according to what we were told by some of the 64's and I remember being told that some students did leave the college. There was a pathetic attempt by a group of 64's against us 65's but it fell flat and the aftermath was a couple of them being tossed out of their beds a number of nights in a row. In 65 there was not even an initiation attempt on the new students because we enjoyed our sleep and there were some hard mean looking blokes in the 1965 intake.

Ella Keesing (Redpath 1950-51)
Thank you again for a chatty Newsletter. I do look forward to catching up with the stories and the comments of recipients of Scholarship Awards. When I read Ruby Riach's article I was prompted to write a reply. I am sending a copy in Word which, if you wish to use it, could be adjusted to the *Talkabout* format. I am sorry to hear the Association may be coming to an end but that's

what we are finding here with Probus Clubs etc. We've all had a turn at being on committees and unfortunately there are no younger replacements. As far as donating for Scholarships, perhaps it may be clearer if you can get some indication of how many would be prepared to contribute. Many of us are in a comfortable financial position but are helping out grandkids with HECS fees and housing deposits.

I hope you won't be in the path of the approaching cyclonic weather. We are just longing for rain down here in Melbourne. We have had so many hot days of over 30 to 38.

John Cosier, Craft lecturer during the 1960s has passed away. His daughter, Narelle let me know.

Tony Sherlock (1951-52) I am writing to thank you for all the hardwork that you have done to keep ex-students informed about news from College days. At 93, I always enjoyed reading *Talkabout*. For some reason, my wife's cousins, Bill and Grahame Keast seemed to be in every issue. It is sad it has to come to a close, but we are certainly indebted to you both.

Tony thinks we have a poetic address. You are very welcome to knock on our door for a cuppa and a chat!

Wendy Hyett (1967-68) Thank you for all the hard work you and your committee members have done over many years to maintain the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College Alumni Association. It is very sad that the association has to close but we are getting older and we can't do what we used to be able to do.

I am sorry that I will be unable to attend the meeting on August 12, because of distance. I wish all of you much happiness and good health.

David Long (1953-54) Time has caught up with all of us and as a result our numbers have decreased

slowly but perhaps now at a faster rate. The decision to wind up the Association is obviously appropriate with remaining funds being put to good use.

As part of the 53-54 session, I can remember standing at Central Station waiting to board the evening train to Wagga Wagga. There were several young men dressed in navy suits with red ties, standing around. In my carriage a young chap sat quietly in the back somewhere. All out at Wagga, bus up to the College and allocated to a dormitory. The same young man not only shared a dorm but a room as well. In second year we did not share a room but still the same dorm. Brian Langworthy and I recently spoke on the phone. In second year I roomed in the same dorm with Darcy Tosh and David Moxon, great characters and wonderful people. Children in NSW must have benefitted greatly from having such people as teachers. And so the experience comes to an end. Please give my best wishes to all you speak to during this time. I will not be able to attend the meeting but support any action taken.

Thank you both for all the work you have done for us. I look forward to the final magazine.

Toni Brewster (Waldren 1956-57) made a generous donation to our Scholarship appeal and sent a letter of thanks and appreciation, as a passive recipient. (ed note: *I enjoyed a phone chat with Toni who lives along the same road as my parents did in the 70s and 80s.*)

Pamela Kidson (Mehag 1960-61) I received your notification of the intended winding up of WWTCAA.

I am appreciative of the formal meeting. I am not able to attend the meeting in person but am very

happy for the dissolution to take place.

You and Bruce and all the committee members have done a wonderful job of keeping the Association going for so long, but even good things must come to a close. I have enjoyed all my copies of *Talkabout* and send my grateful thanks.

I had a long chat on the phone to Bev Elliott (Stockley 1970-71) who lives on 60 acres outside Eden. She sadly lost her husband two years ago after battling multiple myeloma. He was a Wagga Ag lad. She says they met a number of agriculture persons while having treatment in Canberra, who were suffering from the same disease and believes there is a connection between the disease and some of the substances used in agriculture.
As a result of my sending out letters about the upcoming meeting with my handwritten addressing, I have received messages of folk who have passed away, some a while ago.

John Battersby (1948-50) passed away in 2023.

Ena Chase (Scarlet 1958-59) passed away in 2021.

Jeanette Jackson (Cowle 1950-51) passed away in 2018.

Pat Carr (1956-57) Thank you for the information about the Special Meeting to wind up the WWTCAA. Although I will be very sad for this to happen, I will not be able to attend the meeting. Sorry.

I have appreciated the time and effort you and the various Committee Members have given over numerous years to keep the Alumni functioning. I always enjoy reading *Talkabout* and catching up with the news of former students of WWTC.

Although it is getting close to 70 years since I first went to WWTC, I still look back on my time there as 2 wonderful years where I started my career and made lifelong friends and acquaintances, many of whom are sadly no longer with us.

I enjoy reading about *Myrtle* and the *Dame Mary Gilmore Gates*. If my memory serves me correctly, the gates were my year's (1956-57) gift to the College at our graduation.

Thank you to all the Alumni who have helped keep the Association going over the years.

WWTC has a special place in our hearts.

Alan Hayes (1966-67) In the circumstances that you outline, Dissolution of the WWTC Alumni Association makes sense.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the Special Meeting on 12 August, so please register my apology.

Thank you for the mammoth efforts that you have both made to keep the Association going and to inform Alumni via *Talkabout*. I value all that you have done to keep us informed.

I have never forgotten all that my time at WWTC did for me, personally and professionally!

Olga Collard (Taylor 1948-50)

Thank you very much for your notification of this situation. It is a sad day for the Alumni Association, but understandable given the aging population of Alumni, and a sad task that now needs to be carried out.

I appreciate all the work you two have personally put into maintaining this organisation and I thank you for all your efforts.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend. I turned 95 years old last week and although relatively fit am unable to travel to the meeting – my daughter, Debra, is not free to bring me in any case. I wish you much happiness for the future and for the successful disbursement of funds as laid down in the Constitution. *Olga's husband, Bob was the long time president of WWTAA and part of the original Pioneer group that establish it in 1997, before Bruce and I took the reins in 2012.*

Dorothy Green (Keefe 1965-66)

Sorry to hear about you having to close the WWTC group but I do un-

derstand the dwindling of members and want to thank you both for your hard work in keeping things going as long as you have. We are having the same problem with our clubs in ACT.

I will not be able to attend your final meeting in August but thanks for your efforts.

Garry Funnell (1967-68) It is so unfortunate that the agenda for the forthcoming meeting has such a resounding finality. Those of you who have worked hard to maintain the viability of the Alumni Association are to be unreservedly commended. I would definitely have attended the meeting on 12 August but it coincides with a road trip to Queensland and on the date in question I will be at Mt. Tambourine for a family reunion. I would have enjoyed reconnecting with alumni from my years. Please tender my apology.

Helen Watson (Cumes 1969-70)

Thankyou but I am away at that time. Please note my sincere thanks for all the pleasure I have had reading all the stories from other teachers. My partner, who had no knowledge of country teaching conditions has also read many stories with amazement. Thanks for all your work.

Sue Hazel (Perry 1966-67) Thank you for your email of 17 May regarding the (inevitable) disestablishment of WWTCAA. A difficult decision to make, needing bravery and clear thinking, and recognition of circumstances that spell out, *we have done enough*.

While I've not been able to attend meetings, that you have been assiduous in sending out minutes is appreciated. WWTC helped me achieve my long-held dream to be a teacher, and I did love both classroom and (later) school/community library work, and of course the kids!

I have a few souvenirs of the 1966-67 years and plan to bring them over to Wagga Wagga later this year, for contribution to the CSU archive.

While I would like to attend the final meeting in August, I doubt it will be possible (though final dates of the trip east are still pending). Please accept my apologies, and my sincere thanks to you both for keeping the Association running over these last several years.

With best wishes and good luck for filling the spare hours to come!

Laurie Lepherd (1958-59)

I regret being unable to attend the wind up meeting (living in Toowoomba) but I do want to express my thanks to you both for the amount of effort you have put into the Alumni over the years. I have enjoyed receiving *Talkabout* and keeping very indirect contact with colleagues from the 1958-1959 cohort, and other years. Your contribution has been marvellous!

My life has been very busy since full-time work finished in 2020, and I only finished my contract with UniSQ in an honorary research position last December.

Please accept my best wishes for your retirement!

Jessie Glover (Segal 1955-56) A bitter-sweet moment has come. The reality of our ageing years and limited energy all goes into the equation, not just for the WWTC Alumni Association, but for many other former areas of interest and involvement.

If you're sending round an opportunity to vote via email, I will respond to that, but in case, not, I agree with the decision to formally close the Association.

I am unable to attend the final meeting. Age and health issues keep me very much close to home these days.

Albert Foggett (1953-54)

I want to thank both of you for your wonderful efforts and leadership over many years.

Best wishes for the future.

Kathleen Sneddon (Thompson

1960-61) If I wasn't so far away (*Bourke*), I'd love to come to say thank you for continuing the newsletter. Going back to those days of college and early teaching bring such inter-

esting memories. I hope you can keep up the good work.

Lyne Megarry (Judd 1964-65)

Many thanks for your hard work from an alumnus of 1964-65. It's a pity that the Association is gently closing, I would help, but Townsville is too far away for me to be of use! Thank you for keeping the memoires warm.

Kevin Hennessy (1955-56)

Thank you for your interest in keeping the Association going for so long. My late wife, Jan, and I have many wonderful memories of our time there and enjoyed the friendships. I won't be able to attend this meeting but again thank you for your efforts.

Trevor and Bev McGregor (1968-69)

We would like to thank you and all the committee for all the hard work and dedication you have displayed over the years. I will miss *Talkabout*'s stories and information about fellow students from our past. Bev and I met at our first lecture at college in 1968 and WWTC has played a pivotal role in our life since. Thanks for the memories.

Margaret Ham (Gallagher 1965-66)

I cannot attend this event (I'd so much like to) but, as I currently live in London, it's logistically impossible unless I scheduled a special trip.

Whilst we were at WWTC at the same time, I really do not know you two personally but I've so enjoyed reading *Talkabout* over the years (especially since 2010 when my husband and I retired to London as our children/grandchildren were here - and still are). I did attend the 2004 reunion of our year as I was living in Canberra (my home town) at that time.

I was in Canberra last September to attend a 60th reunion of my Leaving Certificate class at Catholic Girls High School. The WWTC graduates were a significant group amongst the 27 attendees and we reminisced fondly on our happy days at WWTC. It's probably inevitable that this

alumni organisation would fold. I sincerely hope that your contribution through your wonderful editing of *Talkabout* will be acknowledged in the records of Charles Sturt University. It represents such a comprehensive and fascinating archive into teacher education and employment at a time that is unimaginable to my own children let alone my teenage grandchildren.

Thank you again for your wonderful work - just so generous.

Gerard Say (1963-64) As a Member of the previous *Talkabout* Committee, in light of the motion to wind-up your current Executive, I would like to congratulate you both on your outstanding achievement in prolonging its life up to now.

Although WWTC for a short time morphed into other entities before *CSU Riverina* began, *RCAE* being the longest, it would be accurate to state that there was not any real continuity beyond a certain point after which the *NSW Department of Education* lost its right to run its Teachers' Colleges and the Federal Government took charge of Australian Tertiary Education.

As a person who lived most of my life in Wagga until moving to Sydney in January, 1976, I take a particular pleasure in viewing the wonderful growth of *CSU* on the former NSW Agricultural Department land on the heights overlooking the Murrumbidgee River. Great pride can be taken in the beautiful campus and the extraordinary number of inspiring projects it has nurtured.

Although I will be unable to attend the August Meeting, I think that it is a very sound idea that our *Scholarship Fund* be passed on to *CSU*.

I turn 80 in July and, given some normal medical issues at this stage of life, I am satisfied in adjusting my activities to match my reduced energy and mobility.

May you both thoroughly enjoy the rest of your years of retirement, free of any demands involving *Talkabout* content or deadlines.

Margaret Walsh (Turnbull 1965-66) Thank you for letting me know about the Special Meeting. It is sad that we are disbanding but I want to thank you and Bruce for all you have done over the years. It has been much appreciated.

Cathy Delves (Coles 1966-67) I am unable to attend the meeting. Thanks to both of you for the amazing effort you have put into the Association over the years. All the best in the future.

Cheryl Hanily (Dawes 1965-66) You've both done a sterling job over the last years. Best wishes, and I hope we continue to hear from you. We are aware that it's 60 years this year that we started at WWTC. Never thought I'd live this long.

Phil Pryor (1958-59) Thanks for all your efforts over time, but perhaps an end or change is in sight. Having failed electronically, I insert a note (no more cheques either) to cover membership and put remainder to good use (scholarship?) Our old close group, Ipati, 1958-59, has faded, but we all had a start, careers, lives.

Margaret Christiansen (Bowen 1950-51) rang me to apologise for not attending the final meeting. While Margaret's hearing is letting her down, she is doing well in 90s.

Ronella Stuart (Snedden 1960-61) I wish to apologise for not being able to attend the meeting. It is sad that it has come to this. I understand that so many members are now quite elderly and it is a pity that some of the more recent graduates have not joined and taken active rolls in running the Alumni.

Thank you for all the work you and the other office bearers have put into

WWTCAA. I wish you all the very best.

Gwen Delofski (Barnett 1959-60) I am so sad to think that you have found the interest waning. This should never have happened and I am in awe of your service to us, the Alumni of WWTC and thank you all most heartily and in appreciation of keeping it going so long even as you yourselves who are much older than me (*we are in fact amongst the younger intake*) could have chosen better things to do.

I have a Bible Study I attend each week at that time every Tuesday but couldn't ignore the amazing effort of keeping us informed and sharing our experiences over the last 30 years: is it thirty years? I am of the intake 1959-60 and I retired 30 years ago and have so enjoyed reading *Talkabout* since then.

Please accept this heartfelt thanks and best wishes for a safe and healthy future sans WWTC.

Pamela James. (Northey 1955-56) I would like to thank you, Bruce and the WWTC Alumni Association for all you have done over many years to keep our fires alight, the fires of our memories of our formative years at WWTC. I haven't been a contributor to *Talkabout* magazine, but have supported financially your valuable work to keep the interest and connections going and have been pleased to do so. Thank you for the invitation to attend the Special Meeting of the WWTC Alumni Association, but I will not be attending because of age and ill health. I am currently receiving chemotherapy for cancer. I trust you have a good response and that the winding down goes well.

Roger Madsen (Ret'd, 78, Broadbeach)

I was interested to read of the WWTC from its inception in 1949 as I went to School with the South Wagga Annex until 1958 at the Showground and then in 1959 we transferred up the road to the new Turvey Park Demonstration School. In 1959 my 6th Class was 6N after Mr Nye who we were lucky to have as a good teacher. I in fact was the 1st

Dux at the school which still surprises me as we had so many bright girls in the class. My father who was in the Dept of Ag was good friends with George Muir who I think had become Principal in 1959. We attended the College end of year musical (*G&S Pirates of Penzance*) several times which I remember for the enthusiasm put into it. At the Showground we really didn't have a good sports oval and I recall for football training we used the College field some times.

These are a few things I remember about Turvey Park in the late 1950's with the flood dislocations as well,

Ruby Riach (1950-54) lecturer passed away in July. Ruby was a staunch member of our fraternity, maintaining her annual subscription and making extra contributions. RIP, Ruby. Ella Keesing wrote on Ruby just before I received word of her death. She was the Needlework Teacher during my time there. I am now 92 so she wasn't much older than her students in 1950. Ruby (Miss Riach of course!) introduced the women students to the stitches and articles that primary school teachers would need to introduce to students from Grade 3 to Grade 6. We were given a piece of flannel to insert in the needle case, this ensured that the needles wouldn't rust we were told. This has certainly proved correct as I still use my needles from here and none have rusted after 75 years! I remember the last article we had to make was a pair of undies where we had to cut from a pattern. And my fairy dress for the chorus of *Iolanthe* required sewing skills. I was given a portable sewing machine by my parents for my 21st Birthday, so I continued sewing after college.

Marie Ellicott (Hulme 1948-50) wrote I am unable to attend the meeting but I agree with your decision on this matter.

I understand the Alumni will be dissolved and all the funds and assets handed over to Charles Sturt Foundation.

I wish to thank you for your work over the years and send you the best re-

gards.

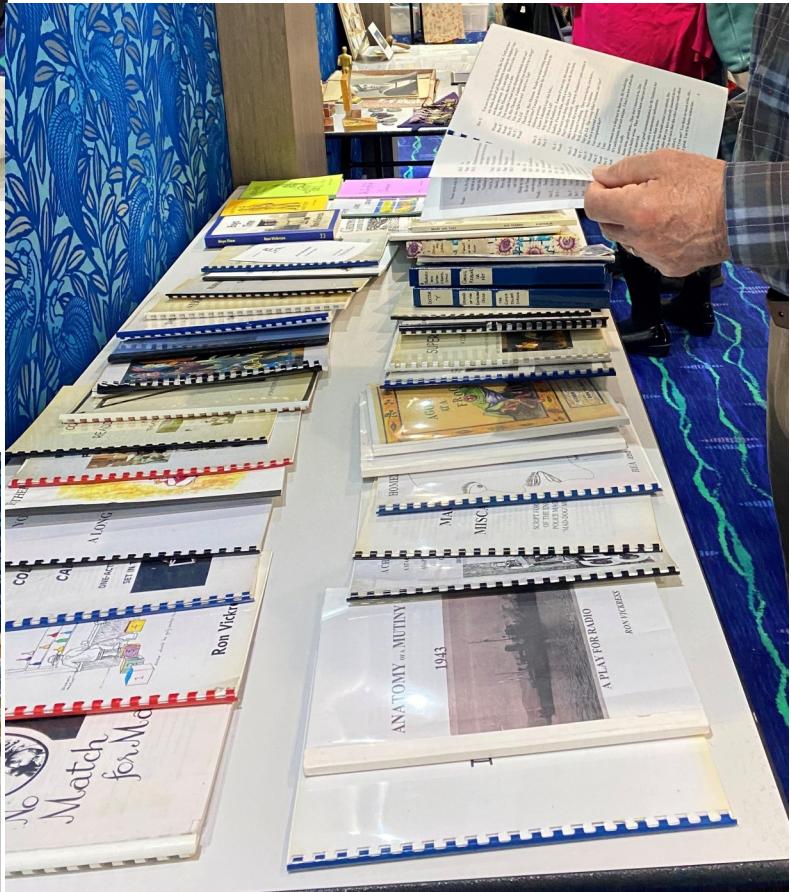
Paul Nicoll (1967-68) rang me the day after the meeting. He had flown back

from Rio de Janeiro to attend but alas, his phone did not marry up the date-line change and he arrived a day late! That would go down as the most novel

A Remarkable Milestone Ron Vickress born 28.6.1925



In June Bruce and Lesley attended the 100 birthday celebrations of Ron Vickress, English lecturer (1965-67) in Armidale. The room was full of folk who have witnessed Ron's very active community involvement from his WWII navy days, drama productions and a prolific collection of poetry he has written. He is still involved in Men's shed and bookclub gatherings. His prolific writing was spread on one of the long tables and notably he has published a book, *Boys Time*, memories of his navy time. We told him we will see him at his 110th birthday if we are still around!



Mrs A' Recognised for Service to NSW Public Education



Di presented with Recognition trophy by The Premier, Chris Minns and the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning, Prue Carr. ([Michael Media](#) Instagram for DoE)

Diana (Di) Alexander OAM (Pierce 1961-62) known to her ex-students as *Mrs A* was recently recognised at the 2024 NSW Department of Education Service Recognition Dinner for 50 years plus.

Di said, *It is amazing to think that the 60 years would pass so quickly since I first arrived at Lockhart Central School in 1963 at the age of 19!*

Recognition trophies for 25 recipients with over 50 years service were presented by The Premier, Chris Minns and the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning, Prue Carr.

Di said, *The dinner was a memorable occasion hosted by Murat Dizdar, Secretary of the NSW Department of Education in the Strangers Room in NSW Parliament House. It was held*



Di in *The Merry Widow*, about 1980

on 26 November 2024 for recipients High School Di's students gained and families and 2023 Alumni. numerous successes.

Di said that she had been overwhelmed by the whole experience and thanked all her friends, family, and Relieving Principal she further expanded her knowledge in students from her 60 years of service leadership in student learning for their wonderful reactions and and wellbeing gaining her Master messages!

Diana Alexander commenced her teaching career at Lockhart Central School as Assistant Principal and Relieving Principal she further expanded her knowledge in students from her 60 years of service leadership in student learning for their wonderful reactions and and wellbeing gaining her Master messages!

On her return to Lockhart Central School as Assistant Principal and Relieving Principal she further expanded her knowledge in students from her 60 years of service leadership in student learning for their wonderful reactions and and wellbeing gaining her Master messages!

Di continued to impact young lives K-12 for another 20 years through her roles as District Arts Consultant and Regional Arts Coordinator (RAC) and Arts Co-ordination Officer (ACO) with The Arts Unit, Lewisham while being based in Riverina.

Throughout Di's entire career teaching K-6 primary at Lockhart Central and Turvey Park Demonstration Schools and year 7-12 at Kooringal High School, she directed and managed numerous school choirs, junior and senior concert bands, musical theatre and drama productions, peer support programmes and mentor systems over and above general teaching duties. During her time as senior music teacher at Kooringal

A Very Special College Memory

Anne Parsons (Myott 1955-56)

Anne's letter:

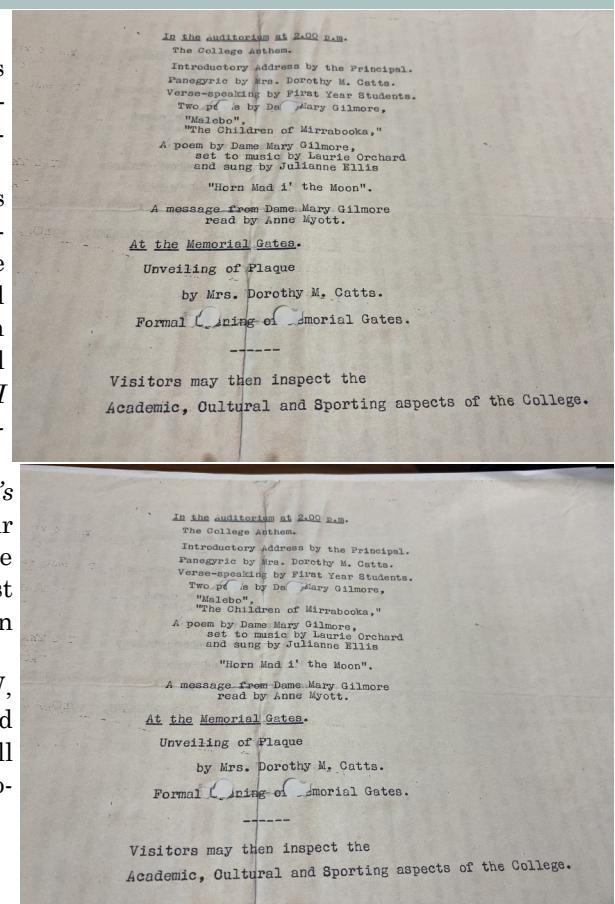
Please pass on to all the committees, past and present, my thanks and congratulations for the excellent and constant publishing of *Talkabout* over so many years. Your sterling efforts have been much appreciated by us all.

I read with interest your information about the fate of various icons from the South Campus. The Dame Mary Gilmore Gates were of particular interest to me, as with inability of Dame Mary to attend the formal opening of the gates, on Tuesday, 30th October, 1956, I had the honour of reading aloud her return thanks for the dedication in her name. Mr Bullen, English and Drama lecturer, kept the original (or was it Mr Blakemore, the Principal) and I read the carbon copy. (*I have copied the program and retyped Dame Mary's words for this paper: editor's note*).

The *Pleasance* concept (Volume 28#1) was also known as *Brock Rowe's Garden* in 1955-56. It is brilliant but as you say, well beyond our means, but to gather all those icons in one peaceful and reflective place would be wonderful. I took my family to visit South Campus just before it was demolished so they knew what I was talking about when I started the conversation, *When I was at Wagga College ...*

For a seventeen year old from a small country town in Western NSW, my two years at WWTC were an exciting introduction to the real world and I made life-long friends as well as learning how to teach, a skill sadly lacking in teacher-training today. Like Dame Mary said, memories are history and my history will always include WWTC.

Thank you again for keeping *Talkabout* alive and prospering.



And Dame Mary Gilmore's Gracious Words

My return thanks for the Mary Gil- tory fills the time between then and more Memorial Gates at the Teacher's now.

College in Wagga Wagga.

Memory is life's greatest gift to man. It laid down in a couple of hundred yards has made all things possible to him in of Fitzmaurice Street; to the first four his upward climb from the ooze to the street lanterns with candles in them aeroplane. It is the link that binds life and mind, perception and reason, and it gave man yesterday and tomorrow. Without memory, there would be nothing but unrecorded NOW.

And if all this is true of man it is equally true of places, for memory is history. Without history a town is just a collection of doors and windows, of by-ways and streets. There is no glory of achievement, no matter what has been done, and no glamour of the past. But for me who remembers the original old Wagga, without even one made road (the population being so small), what a story there is, what his-

I look back to the first piece of metal bridge across the river, the bridge put near where the river-crossing had been: the people in summer still using the old ford to escape paying the bridge toll, money was so scarce! And then years later came kerosene lamps and the lamplighter running with his box of matches and ladder, and how wonderful he was to the town children! Gas came along later, and now the arc lamp lights

est cattle town, the mobs streaming down from the north to fatten on Riverina grass before going to Victorian goldfields and Melbourne. No grass in the world made beef so quickly fat, and as sweet, as the fine native grasses of the Riverina.

Here in this town was Arthur Orton's butcher shop, the Tichborne case being one of the most notable in British history. Here came Moxham and Brown's first travelling circus, from which arose the story of *the man who rode the white bull through Wagga Wagga*, a story now part of our very own folklore, and here was the Wagga Wagga racecourse with its 1000 guinea gold cup, which would have made this town the racing centre of Australia — its racing Canberra — had not Flemington and Randwick been roused up to beat it. These, again, were the days when George Forsyth's

store had its first big windows and Forsyth's well kept the town in drinking water when the river water was so low it was not safe to use it, and those were the years Peter Durie was Headmaster and Grace Galloway Headmistress of Gurwood street Public School with, I think, about 150 children, boys and girls. We paid a shilling a week to go to school, a shilling for the eldest, ninepence the next, sixpence the third, threepence the fourth, after which no one went to school, there being neither school nor desks for them. Because boys made names more than girls, I remember Matt Sawyer, Steele Caldwell, Basil and

Alfred Bennett, my brothers, and W.P. Bluett. Last month W.P. Bluett (all the rest gone) wrote me of a meeting of the Historical Society of Canberra (which he had helped found) at which *a little boy from Wagga Wagga had to do most of the talking* — a little boy with an historical mind and a long memory of this old town. Of the old Stock and Station agents there were Wilkinson, then Lavender, later on to be Wilkinson, Lavender and Graves, and Warden Harry Graves was nephew of that outstanding poet who wrote the famous song *Father o'Flynn*. Mr Warden Harry Graves had the first copy (in MS) sent to Australia and he sang it for the first

time in Australia in Wagga Wagga. All this history I write to be read to you in my absence, as a way of saying thank you to all who had a hand in the gates named after me, and who have come to its official opening. But there is more than even this; These gates are a memorial of that past of the old town that lives in me, and in you through descent from the pioneers, and which will live as long as stone rests on stone or a Wagga Wagga tree grows in the earth. Once again I thank you, gratefully, humbly and rememberingly.

Scholarship Holders 2025 - Jessica Brasnett



Chris & Jenny Blake with Jessica at Wagga Wagga Presentation

My name is Jessica Brasnett, and I am currently studying to become a PDHPE/Primary teacher at Charles Sturt University. I grew up in the small rural town of Condobolin and was inspired to pursue teaching after seeing the impact my mum had as a teacher in remote communities. I also experienced firsthand the need for passionate and committed teachers in these areas during my own time at primary and high school. I'm passionate about health, fitness, and making a difference in the lives of young people, especially those in rural and Indigenous communities.

After completing my studies, my goal is to teach in a primary school located in a rural or remote town in New

South Wales. Having grown up in a small country town myself, I understand the unique challenges and opportunities that come with living and learning in these communities. I am passionate about making meaningful connections with my students and creating a supportive environment where every child feels valued, seen, and encouraged to reach their

full potential. I hope to advocate for greater resources and support services for rural schools, ensuring that students are not disadvantaged because of where they live. It is a priority of mine to build an inclusive classroom that caters to the diverse needs of all learners, those from different cultural backgrounds, students with disabilities, and those requiring additional academic support. I want every child to feel a sense of belonging and success in my classroom. In the long term, I aspire to become a principal in a rural or remote school. I believe this leadership role would allow me to not only support students more broadly but also advocate for teachers and staff working in under-resourced areas. My hope is to drive positive change in these com-

munities by improving access to quality education and ensuring all students, no matter their background, have the opportunity to thrive.

To the generous donors who funded my scholarship, I want to express my deepest gratitude for your incredible support. This scholarship has made a profound difference in my life, both personally and academically. As a university student preparing for a six-week placement in Wagga Wagga, the financial relief this scholarship provides means I can reduce my work hours as a lifeguard and dedicate more time and energy to my teaching and studies. It is allowing me to focus entirely on becoming the best educator I can be without the constant pressure of financial stress. Your support also means I can travel to visit my mum in Orange, who is currently undergoing intensive treatment for Multiple Sclerosis, something that is incredibly important to me and my family. Your generosity is not only supporting my education, but it is also contributing to the future of the many students I will one day teach. Thank you for believing in me and for making a real difference in the lives of aspiring educators like myself. I am incredibly honoured and grateful.

Kylie is studying, Bachelor Of Education Secondary (TAS)

My name is Kylie, and I'm a 36-year-old mother of two young children from Kempsey, NSW. For the last 3.5 years, I worked as a Student Learning Support Officer, helping students in need and building strong professional relationships. Having struggled with dyslexia myself, I find this career incredibly rewarding as it allows me to show others that you can change your future at any age.

After completing my studies, I aspire to teach in my local community, with a particular focus on bringing back textile subjects that students currently have to attend TAFE for. I am passionate about making these subjects more accessible within the school system, ensuring students have the opportunity to explore their creative potential without needing to travel for specialized courses. This

ambition drives me to pursue my studies at the highest level, as I believe in the value of providing diverse educational options. Additionally, I aim to inspire students to pursue their own will to believe in their abilities and work towards their goals with confidence, helping them understand that education can be a transformative tool for their future.

I am deeply honored and grateful to be a recipient of the Wagga Wagga Teachers College Alumni Association Scholarship. This generous support will have a profound impact on both my academic and personal life. It will alleviate some of the financial pressures that I face, allowing me to focus more on my studies and devote more time to my family. With this scholarship, I can continue to pursue my degree with less stress, knowing that I

have the resources to dedicate to my education. The opportunity it provides is invaluable, not only for my academic growth but also for achieving a healthier work-life balance. I truly appreciate the confidence the donors have shown in me, and I am committed to making the most of this opportunity to further my career and contribute positively to my community.

All the best for the coming year.



Kylie Vidler, from Frederickton, a mature age student, studying Technology and Applied Studies, as an online student at The Wagga Campus was presented with her scholarship at Port Macquarie CSU Campus

Robin Henze and Helen Laidlaw still enjoy their friendship of 65 years

See page 4. Helen has written a local history book, titled *On Wadi Wadi Country—From the mountains to the Sea*



Stacey Fish, CSU Foundation Liaison Manager has created an ebooklet portraying the succession of scholarship recipients. It is well worth you accessing it.

<https://alumni.csu.edu.au/news-and-events/newsletters/wwtca>

The booklet is up first before the listed *Talkabout* copies. Click on it to open it

Vale Robert (Bob) Caden (1957-58)

Robert (Bob) Alexander Nico-laas Caden of Calgary, AB, passed away on Saturday, June 14, 2025, at the age of 85 years, surrounded by his family. Bob was born an Australian citizen in Buitenzorg, Dutch East Indies, on July 18, 1939, and the family was evacuated to Sydney, Australia in 1942, where he grew up. After Wagga Wagga Teacher's College, he travelled to Canada where he met and fell in love with Maureen. Together they had three daughters and lived in Montreal for many years. His broad interests saw him working as a teacher, a college professor, an economist, and a long-distance truck driver. His favourite

pastime was hosting dinner parties and having contentious political discussions, while drinking red wine. He also loved watching televised sports, wearing shorts no matter the weather, going for epic walks, spending time with his grandchildren, and incinerating meat on the BBQ with a beer in hand. Bob moved to Calgary in 2006 to be closer to his cherished grandchildren. Bob is survived by his three daughters, Jessica (David), Alexandra (Robert), and Sarah (Michael); his sister Rosemary (Nancye), his grandchildren, Valerie (Aaron), Zachary, Claire, and Christopher; his great-

granddaughter Emily, his niece Jane (Grant); his nephew Steven (Sarah), his special friend, Marjorie, and many other family members and friends. Bob's three daughters are so fortunate to have been raised by a kind and caring father to whom he devoted his life. He had a calm and gentle presence and an unmistakable laugh that will live in our hearts forever. Bob will be returning to his beloved Australia and his ashes will be scattered in Sydney Harbour by his close family. In living memory of Bob Caden, a tree will be planted in the Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area by McInnis & Holloway Funeral Homes. (From *The Sydney Morning Herald* July 12, 2025)

Memories

Richard O'Connor (1954-55)

I arrived at Wagga Wagga Teachers College on a Saturday morning and was allocated a room with two other boys. In the afternoon we had been instructed to attend lectures. The lecturer, fitted out with Cap and Gown proceeded to read from a text book at the rate of knots and when asked to slow down, I believe went even faster. Sunday afternoon was a similar experience. Monday morning we had to rise early for Physical Education. Races, Duck Waddles and Bunny Hops and other tiring physical activities were on the menu.

At breakfast we discovered that these lecturers were actually students in their second year. Some pain was experienced by students in even negotiating the few steps in the dormitories following the PE lessons.

We attended lectures from 9 o'clock to 4:30 pm each day. This was for the two years we attended College. Sport was a special feature of college life as students participated in the local town competitions in rugby, tennis, hockey, basketball and soccer. This filled our weekends.

We all left College and received our appointments the following year. I had to

do National Service so my appointment was delayed by three months. Most of us had no idea where our colleagues had been appointed because we had not prepared ourselves to stay in contact by letter. There were no mobile phones!

I was appointed to a 3rd class at Richmond Primary School in Sydney. The class had been established and fortunately all I had to do was follow the classroom routine which was already set up.

However, the next year, 1957, I received a telegram to attend the Moree inspectorate and I was stationed at the Moree Intermediate High School as a District Relief teacher. This meant that if a teacher was sick for three days, I would be sent to take the class till they returned. If no such situation arrived, I would be sent to the Primary School or Infants School to take the Principal's class to relieve them as in those days, principals had to teach full time. Sometimes if these people were going for a promotion, I would also be given their class for a

week so they could prepare for the inspection. I was sent in those two years all over the Moree region. The experience I gained was great as I could pick up ideas of these experienced people and it was very helpful when I had to establish my own schools.

In 1959 a new school was to be opened in East Moree and I had convinced my future wife to change from High School teaching to the primary school. We were both appointed to the new school in 1959, she to an infant class and me to 3rd and 4th class.

However, after a couple of weeks the District Inspector arrived at the school to inform me that he had opened a new school in a shearers quarters half way between Moree and Gundwinda and the teacher who had been appointed to the situation would be taking my position and I would replace him.

So on the following Monday morning I found my way to the school at a property called Tulloona which was about 4 miles from the main road to the

property. Accommodation was arranged by the community and I was billeted at a different property each month. All the properties were about three to four thousand acres in area. This enabled me to cement lasting relationships with the parents and community. Nearly all the men had seen active service during the wars.

The school room was just one room in the shearing quarters. The room was 4 metres by 3 metres. The blackboard when installed did not allow for the door to the classroom to close. Fortunately a small verandah protected us. There was no power and a small tank provided the water supply. There were no trees and a small bower shed had been erected for some shade. We had a 44 gallon drum as our garbage bin and the property owner's pig found the drum and we never had to empty it. There was a pit toilet. Originally a 40 stand shearing shed had been on the land and it was burned down prior to the erection of the smaller shearing shed. The black soil as a result of the fire was just like sand and our feet were black each day. Two small windows were the only light and air. About 15 children attended.

I certainly knew all the families by the end of the year. Every weekend I travelled to Moree for sport. No board was charged by any of the families. In 1960 I was married and a property owner gave us a house to live in which was

modest but comfortable. We had 32 volt electricity which gave us lights, a slow combustion stove which gave us hot water for a bath and shower. No charge was made for the rent of the house, basically the same facilities as the property owners.

P&C meetings were held at a homestead but only men attended for the first few years. In the fourth year, a school was built in an area with some trees. Funds were raised by the P&C through various methods: Donations, Crown and Anchor, card games. School supplies were sent each year and were mainly pencils, books, rulers and art paper. One year I forgot which month we were to receive our supplies and I put the wrong month down, so we received two issues.

One day a child was injured and as we had no telephone at the school I had to put the child in my car and drive him about ten miles across farm yard roads to his mother so she could take him to a doctor to receive treatment; a fifty mile trip for her. I had to leave the children in the school until I returned about an hour and a half later. Several times we had to deal with snakes in the school yard.

The P and C purchased a bus and for a couple of months I was the driver until a driver could be found. The trip took about an hour each morning and afternoon. After five years I moved to a two teacher school at Croppa Creek

as an assistant. I took leave from teaching to try my hand at farming but after a few more years I returned to teaching at Moree Primary for about 20 years. A vacancy for a principal at Croppa Creek became available and I stayed ten years before retiring and travelling to Europe and America.

Later an Admin position became available at the Moree Inspector's office and I stayed two more years and then secured an Admin position at Courallie High School in Moree.

That position expired and then I was asked to help teachers at a Behaviour School and this lasted a few years. After a few principals had come and gone at this school I was appointed acting Principal until a new principal was appointed at the beginning of second term. I stayed a few weeks with the new principal and then left. I was seventy five years of age.

When I came to Moree there were about 25 to 30 one and two teacher schools in the area but today there may be only four or five and these same schools twenty years ago would have had from 50 to 90 students but today are down to twenty or less students.

I recently looked at a photo of the primary staff at the school in the 1970s and there are 14 staff and 12 are men.

Fortunately since I live in the same region I see former students from the schools in which I had the privilege to teach.



Tulloona Public School 1959

No trees for shade and the only sport we could play was kicking a football

Shearers' Quarters



An excerpt from Charles Sturt University's Vice Chancellor Professor Renee Leon PSM to WWTCAA on the occasion of this Special Meeting, 12 August 2025's

The Wagga Wagga Teachers College Alumni Association has been a beacon of generosity, connection and purpose since its formation in 1997.

The pioneering students who began their studies in 1947 laid the foundation of a tradition of excellence, resilience and community spirit. The WWTCAA has built on these foundations to create a teaching legacy for generations to come.

More than 47 students have received scholarships, from regional and rural backgrounds, pursuing careers in early childhood, primary, secondary and K-12 education. Your goal of reaching \$168000 to sustain two \$5000 scholarships in perpetuity is a powerful reflection of your commitment to education and equity.

Revitalising the *Talkabout* magazine has kept people connected. Your support of the CSU Regional Archives is greatly appreciated. Thanks to your efforts over 2,300 photographs, 134 documents and 142 editions of *Talkabout* have been preserved and digitised, ensuring their accessibility for generations to come.

I wish to acknowledge the remarkable leadership of your committee members, from the founding executive of Bob Collard, Lindsay Budd, Ann Smith, Dot Tanner and Lew Morrell to the more recent stewardship of Bruce and Lesley Forbes, Chris and Jenny Blake, Lindsay Brockway and the late Brian Powyer. Along with many others, your efforts have created a vibrant and enduring alumni community.

On behalf of the entire Charles Sturt University community, thank you. Thank you for your remarkable service, your unwavering support and your belief in the transformative power of education. You are, and always will be, a vital and cherished chapter in our University's story.

Fond Memories

Dr Peter Geekie (1959-60)

In 1958, I was a student at Sydney University where I achieved a 100% result: I failed every subject. Foolishly, the NSW Education Department decided that I nevertheless deserved to be given a place at Wagga Wagga Teachers' College in 1959. I travelled down by train on the day before enrolment, and it was late afternoon when I booked into a respectable looking hotel for the night. In the morning, I would find my way to the college. But I had an evening to fill before that.

I decided that I would walk up the main street, having just one beer at each hotel on the way. It seemed like a good idea at the time. But there was a pub on every corner. No. That's not true. On some corners, there were more than one. It was only in the morning that the real weakness of my entertainment schedule for the previous evening became obvious. But I had an appointment to keep, so I made my way to the Teachers' College. I had no idea what to expect. When I got out of my taxi at the college gate, I found an asphalt road running into the grounds leading to clusters of unimpressive single storey weatherboard buildings. Comparison with the sandstone splendour of the Sydney University quadrangle was not flattering. I did not know that what I was seeing were the shabby remnants of an Air Force hospital; an economy class teachers' college, created for political reasons in 1947.

After the people in charge verified our identities and checked our details, I was taken with a group of other male enrollees to one of two scruffy buildings collectively known as *Kambu*. The photograph below shows *Kambu Minor* exactly as it was on that morning, in all its



Here, me with my roommate, Darby and the way we lived embodied it. It is the dorm. I cannot remember what we were doing. The wall of *Kambu* behind us is clearly in need of a coat of paint. There are no insect screens on the small windows. There was no air conditioning. In the winter, we had only a single bar electric radiator in our room to warm us, its element dangerously exposed. It must have posed a serious fire risk, but at that time nobody seems to have cared



about such things.

Most of the *Kambu Minor* boys outside are dressed as required for attending the dormitory. I am on the left. Next to me is Peter Barlow and then Darby in long trousers, long sleeved shirts and ties. Brown. Max Younger is next and then What we studied was almost certainly Mac Snodgrass with Dave Reid behind him. Reg Dallas is on the right. He was the content of modern education probably only sixteen. Crouching at the front is Swampy Lake. Tiny Hammond learning about music and art and the and Malcom Lobb are missing. Most of history of the novel was interesting us are wearing college track suits (or and enriching. It was a strange parts of them), our leisure time dress. hotchpotch of subjects. Even looking Behind us is the Assembly Hall, less back now, after sixty years, there than a hundred metres from where we seems to be no underlying philosophy slept. This is where plays produced by determining what was taught. But the drama group were presented, and that was, perhaps, a strength. Many the annual Gilbert and Sullivan operetta of the lecturers seemed to be talking

staged. The most regular use of the Assembly Hall, however, was the weekly meeting of the whole student body and the entire teaching staff. Each week we sang *Gaudeamus Igitur*. Later in life I discovered that I was one of a very small group of people capable of singing, in Latin, two verses of *Gaudeamus*. Of course, I had no idea of what the words meant and no one ever offered a translation. I know now that it begins "Let us therefore rejoice while we are young." We did not know what it meant, but our singing reflected that sentiment,



sang it with the joyous exuberance of youth.

Mostly of the same people as in the previous one. This time Mac Snodgrass is missing. His father had died and he had returned to bring in the crop on the family farm. Tiny Hammond is there this time, his arm draped over Dave's shoulder, and Malcom Lobb is also present, standing to the left of Laurie Orchard. We



down-at-heel splendour.

about what they knew best; about their enthusiasms. It was what I needed at that time in my life. It led me in new directions. It gave me new types of knowledge.

On most Saturday nights, a dance was held in the dining room: the tables cleared away and a small band hired. One night, when I changed partners for the sixth or seventh time in a Progressive Barn Dance, I found myself with Ruth Jordan. I don't believe I made any clear overtures to her, but she clearly detected something in my manner. She looked into my eyes. *I'm not interested in you*, she said. She gestured across the room towards a tall, handsome, blonde young man. I suppose a sensible boy would have accepted that he had been told to get lost. Perhaps it was just that I wasn't very sensible. Or maybe I liked the look of her so much I decided to give it another try. One night after the evening meal I got up and followed her when she left the dining hall. I caught up with her. When she turned to me, I asked her if she might like to go out with me. *Okay*, she said.

When she got back to her dorm her friends were curious.

Did he ask you out?

Yes, she said.

When?

She shrugged.

Where is he taking you?

I don't know, she said. *He didn't say*.

These small difficulties were quickly sorted out, and on Friday night we boarded the bus and went into town. We went to the coffee shop. And we had cappuccinos. We were at the cutting edge of sophistication. Most important, we had a nice time. We went out together a lot after that. While the weather was warm we went to the pool and the beach on the river. We had meals at local restaurants. We went riding on our pushbikes. Sometimes we just walked around

the town. On one weekend we hitch hiked to Albury to go to their Agricultural Show. The photograph shows us when we arrived there.

We also went on trips organized by the college authorities. One such outing was a day trip to Tumut, to see the

urges her to return to the boarding house before the doors were locked, but Julie is intent on meeting Billy, even if it means violating the curfew. Her friend rushes off leaving Julie standing by herself in the dark. At that point, a voice from off-screen said clearly and distinctly, *Is that you Miss Jordan?*

Sitting next to me in the dark of the cinema, Miss Ruth Jordan started violently and looked over her shoulder. Had she been discovered? Was expulsion looming because she had violated her curfew? It took a moment or two before she realized that it was Julie, not her, who was being addressed. It



snow. Ruth and I are in the front, with a snowman built by some of the students in the background. Guy Pickering and Darby Brown are standing in the left rear. Betty Probert is sitting on Bill Wenban's knee. Mac Snodgrass is behind Ruth. Robin De Brouer is immediately behind me.

Like many of the other students, Ruth and I often went to the cinema on Friday or Saturday night. But one week a local cinema was showing *Carousel*, a musical I had liked, but which Ruth had not seen. There was a problem. It was showing only during the week when we were supposed not to leave college grounds after 7 o'clock. But when I proposed that we might go anyway, Ruth didn't hesitate. So, about 8 p.m. we found ourselves sitting in the dark of the cinema watching Shirley Jones play Julie Jordan, a mill girl who had fallen for Billy Bigelow, a non-flashy carnival worker. At the time in which the film was set, the owners and managers of mills aimed to control the moral and social behaviour of their workers. The mill girls lived in a boarding house where they shared bedrooms and ate three meals a day in a large dining room. Supervisors employed by the mill owners enforced curfews and strict codes of conduct. Temperance was compulsory. It all sounds strangely familiar, doesn't it? Early in the film Julie's best friend

was a startling moment, but it didn't stop us from staying and enjoying the film.

It is undeniably true that Ruth and I were focused on enjoying ourselves rather than enriching our lives academically. While many other students studied, Ruth and I got out and about. We often went walking outside the college grounds at forbidden times. I remember nights when we walked hand in hand along the streets of Wagga Wagga, singing as we went. It might sound like romanticized fiction, but it isn't. Many readers of what I have written would know from personal experience that, as late as the end of the 1950's, much of the accommodation at Wagga Wagga Teachers' College was still bleak and draughty, and the educational infrastructure basic. Instruction was sometimes uninspired. Sometimes we simply sat and took notes at dictation speed. It is nevertheless true, that most people I know who were there, look back on the experience with deep affection. Personally, I am truly delighted that I failed catastrophically at Sydney University in 1958, because that led me there and it gave me many things of extraordinary value, Ruth Jordan among them. In January this year, we celebrated our 65th wedding anniversary.



Georgina Wilson-Greene (Wood-Davies 1960-61)

(Allayne Foley — sister)

Georgina passed away peacefully in her sleep on February 2. Her passing was a huge shock to her family and friends as she had been in excellent health the day before.

Georgina grew up in the village of



Wingello and attended high school at Bowral. She then went to Wagga Wagga Teachers College and met many wonderful people who became lifelong friends.

Her first appointment was at a two-teacher school at Penrose — a village a couple of miles from Wingello. But after about twelve months there was an exodus of pupils, when the people belonging to the Plymouth Brethren religious denomination moved to Moss Vale, *en masse*. The school was immedi-

ately reduced to one teacher and Georgina suddenly found herself at the Fairy Meadow Demonstration School. She went on to teach in the Illawarra for the rest of her Australian teaching career.

Georgina gained overseas experience when she spent a year exchange teaching in Hurstpierpoint in the south of England. Always one to be different she flew to England rather than going by ship. Her ticket allowed her to zig zag across a country, so long as the next stop was closer to her final destination than the place she was leaving. Hence, she was able to extensively explore Mexico and the USA.

So much was fitted into that exchange year that I can't imagine how it was managed. Every spare moment was spent in getting to know Great Britain, Ireland, Greece and Russia. When Georgina returned to Australia she was appointed to Berkeley. As she moved up the promotional scale, she taught at various Illawarra schools until she ended her career at Balarang as Assistant Principal. Her former Balarang colleagues and pupils remember her as a wonderful educator and inspirational leader. Always smiling and always making new teachers feel welcome. Someone who was a caring leader and who always fostered a love for learning and community involvement.

In 2010 Georgina attended a WWTC reunion at which participants were invited to contribute a one page summary of their life for a publication titled *Fan Tales: Life stories of students and staff at Wagga Teachers' College 1960 - 61*. Georgina concluded her story with the following words: *"I retired in 1996 but didn't leave work entirely. I job shared at Warilla Primary working 2 days a week with Grade 1. I was then employed at the same school to teach small groups Stop Motion Animation and Video. This was my hobby so I was lucky to get paid for it! In 2005 I stopped working and started full time retirement. This has meant travel, creative sewing, Tai Chi, and the theatre. I have never been busier."*

Georgina is survived by her two sons, Miles and Lance, her former husband, Tony, and her sister, Allayne.

She is remembered with great affection and will always be sadly missed.

Lynne Greenwood (Pudney 1959-60) could not attend the meeting. Murwillumbah has a wonderful art gallery on land donated by Doug Antony family. It houses the Margaret Olley collection. It also has on loan from NGA Canberra, the luminous, mesmerising Monet Haystack

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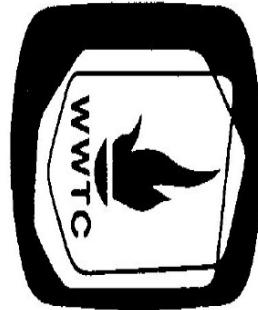
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