

REMARKABLE
WOMEN
HALL OF FAME



EST. 1899

MENTONE GIRLS' GRAMMAR



Empowered Women Empower Others

Bao Nguyen (Class of 2002)

Schools continue to occupy a unique place in the hearts and minds of neighbourhoods and nations, and it is because they embody possibility which in turn brings hope to all of us.

The Remarkable Women Hall of Fame was established to honour the many women who have walked the halls of Mentone Girls' Grammar, and to recognise the outstanding achievements of those who have excelled in their fields.

There is still much work to be done in creating a gender-equal world. Girls' schools, like ours, are best placed to challenge equal representation in fields such as politics, science and technology among others. We are committed to playing our part to instil hope for a better world and a better future.

"Empowered women empower others". Never a truer word was spoken. Our Alumni, remarkable women all, are the pathfinders and pioneers for generations of girls to come.

I hope that as you read through these incredible stories of our Remarkable Women, that you will be inspired by all that is possible.

Vero Nihil Verius

Ms Natalie Charles
PRINCIPAL





Simpson Sisters

SCHOOL FOUNDERS

– 1899 –

Vera Mackie

EMERITUS PROFESSOR

– 1973 –

Dr Margaret McLorinan

SURGEON & HEALTH CARE PIONEER

– 1901 –

Dr Polixeni Papapetrou

LAWYER & PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTIST

– 1978 –

Annette Kellerman

ATHLETE, PERFORMER & AUTHOR

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CONDUCTOR, DIRECTOR AND LECTURER

– 1982 –

Mary Bawden

TRANSPLANT DONOR ADVOCATE
& RETIRED KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

– 1969 –

Wendy Leegel

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

– 1983 –

Jo Cavanagh OAM

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

– 1971 –

Sarah Derrington

HEAD OF SCHOOL
& DEAN OF LAW PROFESSOR

– 1984 –



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Nicole Bradtke

TENNIS CHAMPION & COACH

– 1987 –

Reena Ghelani

HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER

– 1987 –

Rakhee Ghelani

FREELANCE WRITER

– 1990 –

Dr Manjusha Thorpe

COMMERCIALISATION MANAGER

– 1991 –

Dr Sarah Miller

CLINICAL & FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGIST

– 1992 –

Dr Pratiti (Mimi) Bandopadhyay

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, LABORATORY HEAD,
UNIVERSITY LECTURER
& PEDIATRIC NEURO-ONCOLOGIST

– 1994 –

Zoe Badwi

INTERNATIONAL SINGER & SONGWRITER

– 1996 –

Christine Melis

BARRISTER, LEGAL ADVOCATE & TEACHER

– 1998 –

Dr Suzie Sheehy

ACCELERATOR PHYSICIST

– 2001 –

Alisha Withers

COMMANDER, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

– 2001 –

Dr Bao Nguyen

VISUAL NEUROSCIENTIST,
OPTOMETRIST & LECTURER

– 2002 –

Neary Ty

TELEVISION REPORTER

– 2005 –



Simpson Sisters

SCHOOL FOUNDERS

■ CLASS OF 1899

We honour the Simpson family and in particular Effie Simpson and her three sisters, Minnie, Ethel and Daisy, whose passion and dedication to the education of girls, have made an indelible impact on the School they founded and generations of young women.

A local advertisement announced that the Mentone High School for Girls would open on 1 February 1899.

Mrs Sarah Simpson was considered to be the driving force behind this family decision to start a school, having worked as a teacher herself for many years. As young women, Sarah and her sister Fanny emigrated to the colony of Victoria in 1863. Sarah ended up teaching in Ballarat where she married fellow Irish immigrant, William Hamilton Simpson at the age of 33. Unlike many of her generation she refused to give up work, instead she coupled teaching with her new role as wife and mother. Her children, Mary (Minnie), Euphemia (Effie), a son who died in infancy, Ethel and Daisy were all born within ten years. The girls attended a fee-paying school in Ballarat where academic excellence was encouraged. Effie passed the Matriculation Examination for the University of Melbourne in 1894 aged 15. By the end of 1898, the two eldest daughters, Minnie and Effie had completed their education. Having studied many different subjects over and above those at University, at just 19, Effie was more highly educated than most other young women of her age.

With four daughters aged from 13 to 21, the Simpson family decided to move from Ballarat to establish a school for the daughters of the business and professional people who took residence in the increasingly fashionable bayside suburb of Mentone. They purchased a substantial brick home called 'Cobbalanna' for their new venture.

Minnie and Effie were to run the school, while Daisy and Ethel would become its first pupils. Effie assumed the role of Principal, which she maintained until 1906, while Minnie took care of the household affairs of the new boarding students. Daisy and Ethel later became accomplished teachers in their own right. Effie was quiet, calm, efficient and intelligent. Her Principal's Reports each year indicated that she had a clear philosophy of education and expected excellence from both students and teachers. She encouraged her staff to instil vitality and interest into their subjects to inspire a passion for learning from their students.

The Simpson educational philosophy was simple, "to be bold, to do one's best and to never give in".

Mentone High School, which became known as the Simpsons' School by the locals, offered tuition in English, Mathematics, Latin, French and Elementary Drawing, together with a range of optional subjects from German and Botany to Physiology and Calisthenics. This extensive curriculum slowly began to attract pupils and by 1900 there were too many students to be accommodated in 'Cobbalanna'. Confident that their School would grow, the family purchased an additional building and the School continued to flourish as a school for all ages, not just a high school.

As a result of their foresight and determination, the Simpsons' School found its place in the hearts of Mentone locals, forming as much of the town's fabric as the iconic coastline upon which it is built. The early Mentone Girls were remarkable indeed. They chased new ideas of academic and sporting achievement, and held a fundamental belief they could achieve anything.



Margaret McLorinan

SURGEON AND HEALTH CARE PIONEER

■ CLASS OF 1901

Margaret McLorinan was highly regarded for her exceptional professional ability, her kindness to patients, her outstanding ability as a surgeon and administrator, and her inspirational work as a pioneer in her field.

Margaret McLorinan, known affectionately as Peg, was always ahead of her time.

Born in 1887, she graduated from the Simpsons' School at age 14 and qualified for Matriculation at the University of Melbourne to study Medicine at just 15. She was one of the first women to be admitted to the Royal Australian College of Surgeons and pioneered the delivery of health care for women by women in the early 1900s.

Dr McLorinan, opened rooms for private patients in Melbourne where she was simply known as "Dr Peggy". Before long, Queen Victoria Hospital was opened, where she remained on staff for 21 years and became one of Melbourne's most distinguished surgeons. In addition, Margaret was President of the Honorary Medical Staff, member of the committee of management, and was the driving force and founder of the Obstetrics Department – where she delivered 200 babies in her first year.

During this time, she was also appointed honorary surgeon at the Women's Hospital in Melbourne. She was known throughout Victoria for her strength of character, professional ability and personal charm. She was loved by all her patients. She was unflinchingly kind to them, a trait which she carried all through her schooldays, being known as someone who was always kind to the

other students, particularly those who were not as gifted as she was. Her selfless devotion to her work and her patients continued throughout her life. During the war years, when there was a lack of doctors, Margaret simply doubled her workload.

"I knew Margaret in schooldays. We were both born in 1887. In later life I became her patient. I cannot speak too highly of this remarkable woman. It was a grief to me when I heard of her illness in 1932." – From 'Schooldays with the Simpsons 1899 – 1906' by Fairlie Taylor.

In 1932, at the age of just 45, a stroke took the young life of the incredible Dr Margaret McLorinan.

In 2002, Margaret was officially recognised for helping shape the nation and was included in the Victorian Honour Roll of Women.



Annette Kellerman

ATHLETE, PERFORMER AND AUTHOR

■ CLASS OF 1902

Annette Kellerman overcame obstacles and took the risk to challenge social norms. Her courageous drive and determination to succeed despite the odds, truly set her apart.

Annette Kellerman believed she could do anything she wanted – and she did! The feisty Mentone teenager, who was one of the earliest Mentone Girls, took on the world in a self-styled journey to international acclaim as a long distance swimmer, diver, dancer, actress, athlete, fitness expert, author, model and movie star.

The girl who once held swimming classes for her classmates became the highest paid vaudeville star in the USA with her sparkling costumes, daring dives and underwater antics.

She was arrested in the USA in 1908 for indecency after wearing a male bathing costume on the beach that finished well above the knee. She was later credited for having introduced the one-piece bathing suit, a most daring and scandalous innovation at the time. Her lifetime achievements are well documented but what is truly inspirational is that she had to defy great odds to get there.

Annette was born in 1886 with bowed legs. By age two she was unable to stand upright and lived with the physical and emotional pain caused by heavy leg braces, until a doctor recommended she try swimming. She was only seven years old but she took to it, quite literally, like a fish to water and it changed her life forever.

“My early physical misfortune has turned out to be the greatest blessing that could have come to me. Without it I should have missed the grim struggle upward and the reward that waited at the end of it all.”

Annette was a pioneer of women's endurance swimming. She trained over long distances with her father's encouragement and was the first woman to attempt to swim the English Channel.

She starred in early aquatic films, as 'Queen of the Sea' and 'Neptune's Daughter', which was filmed in the Great Barrier Reef. Annette's own life-story was subsequently filmed under the name of 'The Million Dollar Mermaid' with Ester Williams in the lead role.

Annette also worked with the celebrated Sister Kenny in Queensland in her fight against poliomyelitis. Having also suffered from polio as a child, Annette used her expertise in swimming to help with the rehabilitation of polio victims.

By all accounts Annette was not a brilliant student and she encountered numerous social restrictions, but armed with strength of mind and an unflinching belief in herself, Annette Kellerman lived a remarkable life – she is an inspiration to us all.



Dulcie Boling

AUSTRALIAN MEDIA ICON

■ CLASS OF 1949

Dulcie Boling is a legend of the Australian media industry. Her avant garde approach initiated a more contemporary agenda for women's media and left a formidable legacy. As the former Editor-in-Chief of New Idea, she faced some fierce competitors in the Australian media industry.

Dulcie was one of Rupert Murdoch's top executives, risked the ire of the British monarchy by publishing the scandalous "Camillagate" tapes, and even managed to stare down the formidable Kerry Packer when he challenged her decision to move New Idea into supermarkets. The move was an outstanding success, and the Packer organisation swiftly followed.

A few years into her editorship, with New Idea's circulation and advertising revenue increasing rapidly, the seemingly indomitable Women's Weekly switched to a monthly format. By 1975, Dulcie, began the slow and subtle changes of updating a tired, traditional homemaker magazine for women into magazine history; a publishing giant, selling a million plus copies per week by the late 80s, proudly wearing the slogan, 'the best-selling weekly magazine for women in the world (per capita)'.

Dulcie always wanted to be a journalist. "My mother worked very hard to send me to a private school at secondary level, and I wanted to make the best of every opportunity. I was so excited to become the youngest House Captain (Kent) at Mentone Girls' Grammar, and later a prefect. Principal, Miss Jeannie McCowan, had a powerful influence on my formative years. She was an intellectual, an early feminist, and was an outstanding role model, quite unique at the time. My mother and grandmother were the dominant forces in the family. By the time I left school I had no idea men ran everything... it was too late to change!"

Burning for a start in journalism, Dulcie secured a position as a copy girl at The Herald and Weekly Times, and began work just before her fifteenth birthday. She completed her Matriculation certificate (sixth form) at night school the year she turned 16 while working full time, and gained both a coveted four-year journalism cadetship, and entry to the Melbourne University two-year Diploma of Journalism.

At 19, she married John Boling and raised two daughters before returning to work part time at her local newspaper. The family were living in Sydney when Dulcie joined New Idea as their only National Staff Writer.

"I loved writing and chasing my own stories, but like most working women, I found it difficult juggling full time work and motherhood. After two years I was offered the role of Deputy Editor at head office in Melbourne, a great career opportunity. Typically of married life at that time, it was my husband who decided I could take it up (he had a national job and could work out of either city)."

This was a key move for Dulcie which sparked her meteoric rise to the top. Dulcie left her executive role in the magazine group early in 1996 after 15 years editing New Idea, ten of those years in the dual role as Chief Executive, to take up the coveted seat on the Seven Network board.

Dulcie has also served on several corporate boards including News Ltd, ING, Country Road, several IT and venture capital companies. She was a long-term director of the Mental Health Research Institute, the Australian Cancer Institute, Chairman of the Old Treasury Trust, Tourism Victoria, and was an inaugural trustee and Vice Chairman for 12 years on the Melbourne Festival, and a trustee of the National Gallery of Victoria, plus many other not-for-profit boards, including the world's first female Chair of the showbiz charity, Variety. She has also mentored women in business to help them achieve their aspirations.



Mary Bawden

TRANSPLANT DONOR ADVOCATE
AND RETIRED KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

■ CLASS OF 1969

Mary Bawden (nee Bowes) has many fond memories of her school days. In fact, she loved school so much that she pursued teaching in early childhood education after graduating from Mentone Girls' Grammar.

Mary represented her beloved house, St Margaret's, as House Captain in her final year, when they claimed victory. She was also awarded the Ethel M Thompson Memorial Prize for Citizenship in Year 12.

"There was a personal quality to the School. The teachers knew us inside-out and encouraged and facilitated us to reach our goals. In fact, when I completed Year 12, I begged my father to allow me to return to do another year as I'd had such a wonderful time."

Mary was accepted into Melbourne Kindergarten Teachers' College and was elected to the Student Representative Council and the Music Club as President, along with being a choir member.

"I think one of the reasons I wanted to be a teacher is that I have a great love for education. I equally loved my years at teachers' college and as a teacher." Mary embraced her leadership qualities that flourished at School into her professional development by representing the Peninsula and Chelsea Kindergarten Teachers' Association (PACKTA) as a committee member and president.

Mary's health dramatically declined in the early 2000s, eventually leading her to have a liver transplant. This was an emotional and challenging time for Mary, becoming bedridden for 12 months and spending many nights in hospital. Mary showed her true strength and resilience by attending her daughter's wedding just 21 days after her transplant.

"Being at my daughter's wedding was an achievement I am most proud of as I was unsure if I would be well enough to do it."

She felt she had been given a second chance at life. Her focus changed to promoting organ and tissue donations through Donatelife and Transplant Australia.

Mary has competed at the Transplant Games in swimming, shot put, archery, kayaking, ten pin bowling and more, placing and winning on many occasions. During the 2014 Melbourne Games, she received the Clifford T Henderson award for 'Best demonstrating the spirit of the Games'. Following the 2018 Gold Coast games, she was awarded 'Most supportive female competitor' in the Victorian team.

"The camaraderie and support from one another is a huge part of the Games as it showcases the success of transplantation."

Mary's love for life is demonstrated through all she has achieved since her transplant.

"I am committed to honouring my donor and family by living my life to the fullest and making the most of every opportunity to promote organ donation. I have celebrated years with my family and friends, welcoming new babies and witnessing them growing up. I am an ordinary person living an extraordinarily wonderful life."



Jo Cavanagh OAM

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

■ CLASS OF 1971

Jo Cavanagh has long been a change merchant, working tirelessly to help vulnerable families, children and young people. Her professional life has spanned over 35 years, starting in the State juvenile justice area, before moving to work with children in out-of-home care. Her passion is now to strengthen families and prevent the need for child removal wherever possible.

“As a student at Mentone Girls’, I was incredibly fortunate to receive additional support and encouragement from some very special teachers and the Principal, Miss Prudence Lewty, who all recognised that I had a complex family situation. Miss Lewty worked her magic to keep me at the School and the teachers inspired me to believe in myself and my abilities, and to set my goals high.”

Jo went on to study a Bachelor of Arts and an Honours degree in Social Work, both at Monash University and later completed a Master of Management through the Australian Institute of Management.

In 1990, Jo was awarded a Churchill Fellowship which afforded her the opportunity to embark on an incredible learning adventure to study the prevention of child abuse in North America. On her return to Australia, Jo established her own consulting business and became involved with the Victorian Government to prevent the abuse of children and to develop standards to improve the quality

of substitute care services in Australia. She was also appointed as a Pre-Hearing Convenor for the Melbourne Children’s Court, and played a significant role in the development of alternative dispute resolution for the family and criminal divisions.

Since becoming Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Family Life in 1996, Jo has grown Family Life from a modest community agency, to one with several service centres and a range of social enterprises.

In 1998, on behalf of Family Life, Jo published the *Through the Eyes of the Child* report which demonstrated the need for a whole-family approach to preventing family violence. The research initiated by Jo, together with Lesley Hewitt from Monash University, led to an Australian Heads of Government, Australian Family Violence Prevention Award in 1999. Then, as past National President of Family Services Australia, Jo worked with the Australian Government to implement the 2005 Family Law reforms.

Jo’s memberships and appointments are too numerous to mention. National contributions have included ministerial appointments to the Marriage and Family Council and the Australian Council for Children and Parenting. Jo is currently National Vice President for Family and Relationship Services Australia, a member of the Advisory Council for the Centre for Social Impact, and a member of the National Coalition for Child Safety and Wellbeing.

In the 2013 Australia Day Honours, Jo was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to the community through welfare organisations. The award recognises the enormous contribution Jo has made transforming the lives and outcomes of so many women, children and families across the Australian community.



Vera Mackie

EMERITUS PROFESSOR

■ CLASS OF 1973

A single change to the school curriculum at Mentone Girls' Grammar in the 1970s paved Vera's career path. Today, she is a renowned academic in her field who specialises in Japanese feminism and gender history.

Vera was born in Glasgow, Scotland, migrating with her family to Victoria, Australia when she was just nine years old. Vera commenced her secondary education at Mentone Girls' Grammar in 1968, graduating in 1973. During this time, high schools in Australia were beginning to turn their focus to our closest neighbours, the Asia-Pacific region, and languages from this part of the world were introduced into the curriculum. This saw the introduction of Japanese at Mentone Girls' Grammar. It was this single shift in Vera's schooling curriculum that shaped the trajectory of her career.

Vera was one of the first group of six students to study the Japanese language at Mentone Girls' Grammar:

"It was wonderful to be in a small school which cared for the individual needs of its students. Mentone was willing to make a long-term investment in building up the Japanese language program from small beginnings to a program with a sound reputation."

She immediately fell in love with this rich, yet difficult language. Vera went on to complete a Bachelor of Arts with Honours and a Masters degree at Monash University, both focusing on Japanese and Linguistics. In 1994 she completed her PhD in History and Women's Studies at the University of Adelaide.

"I consolidated my knowledge of Japanese with studies at Monash University and then, thanks to a Japanese government scholarship, in Japan. The early stages of my academic career were built on the ability to undertake intensive academic research in primary sources in the Japanese language."

Over the years, Vera has enjoyed teaching the Japanese language, Japanese studies, Asian studies, Gender studies and Cultural studies. She has held teaching positions at various institutions including Swinburne, the University of Melbourne and the University of Wollongong. She has also held visiting Professorships and Fellowships at numerous universities in countries such as Japan, the USA, Singapore, the Philippines and Germany.

"I feel blessed to have pursued my academic career at the time I did, when Australian governments actively supported the study of Asian languages and studies."

As she progressed through her studies, Vera's proficiency in Japanese studies and linguistics began to intersect with her interest in gender and history. This also became the foundation of her first book, 'Creating Socialist Women in Japan, 1900-1937' (Cambridge 1997).

Since then, Vera has authored and edited a number of books including 'Feminism in Modern Japan: Citizenship, Embodiment and Sexuality' (Cambridge 2003); 'Remembering Women's Activism' (Routledge 2019), with University of Wollongong's, Associate Professor Sharon Crozier-De Rosa; and 'IVF and Assisted Reproduction: A Global History' (Palgrave, 2020), with University of Wollongong's, Professor Sarah Ferber and Dr Nicola J. Marks.

Vera's work and contributions have seen her awarded the title of Emeritus Professor of Asian and International Studies in the School of Humanities and Social Inquiry at the University of Wollongong. She is also Foundation Director of the Centre of Critical Human Rights Research.



Dr Polixeni Papapetrou

PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTIST

■ CLASS OF 1978

Dr Polixeni Papapetrou has carved an extraordinary career path as a practised lawyer, and one of Australia's leading contemporary photographic artists.

As the first born to a Greek immigrant family in the 1960s, 'Poli' was the bridge between the two cultures for her non-English speaking parents. "There was a lot of responsibility that I had to deal with from the age of about five. There wasn't a lot of room left for childhood play."

Her father was determined to provide her with an excellent education and, after moving to Bayside, allowed Poli her pick of schools in the area. "I felt that Mentone Girls' Grammar was the most accepting school with a lovely atmosphere and energy."

"When I was at School my goal was to get into the hardest course that I could aim for which at the time was law at the University of Melbourne. Having this goal was the motivation I needed to do well in my final year. My legal studies teacher was encouraging and a huge inspiration to me. When I think about what I valued at School, it was the support that the teachers gave me. School felt like home for me and I felt safe there."

Poli admits that Art was not her strong suit at School, but with a small twist of fate and a tiny white lie, she would find a new focus – behind a lens. After graduating with her chosen law degree in 1984, Poli landed her first job in the legal profession.

"I was asked to introduce myself to the office and talk about my hobbies. However, as I didn't have any, I just made up on the spot that I had this hobby of photography. Everyone was interested and wanted to know what I photographed and I was asked to bring my camera into the office to photograph a forthcoming function. And of course that motivated me very, very quickly into buying a camera and doing a crash course in photography."

Poli became enthralled in researching the history of photography. She felt the technical side of photography was not enough and wanted to understand the history of the medium, what had happened before and what distinguished photography as an art form.

At the age of 40, with two young children, Olympia and Solomon, and working as a part-time lawyer and part-time artist, Poli knew she had to make a choice. "I reached the stage in my life where I had to decide whether to work as a lawyer or as an artist in a full time capacity. I felt I could express more about my interior life, thoughts and the world through my art rather than in the law."

In her work, Poli looks at the relationship between history, contemporary culture, identity and being. Her subject matter has included Elvis Presley fans, Marilyn Monroe impersonators, circus performers, body builders and more recently the cultural positioning of childhood. She has held over 50 solo exhibitions and participated in over 100 group exhibitions in Australia, Asia, Europe and the USA.

Surveys of her work were held at the Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney and the Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne. She has participated in major international photography festivals in Korea, Colombia, The Netherlands, France, Bratislava, China, Greece, and Canada. Poli has been the recipient of numerous grants from the Australia Council for the Arts and Arts Victoria. She is the recipient of the Windsor Art Award (2015), the Josephine Ulrick and Win Shubert Photography Award (2009) and the Albury Regional Art Gallery National Photographic Award (2003).

Her work appears in over 200 articles, citations and essays and is held in public collections including the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Bendigo Art Gallery; Geelong Art Gallery; Gippsland Art Gallery; and in corporate collections including the Wesfarmers Art Collection and BHP Billiton, Melbourne. Her work also features in a number of corporate and private collections around the world.

As someone with a keen interest in understanding the values and motivations of adolescents, Poli's advice to the next generation of Mentone Girls is to study hard and find your passion.

"The most important thing is to find your voice, to find something you love. It doesn't matter what you do in life, but you have to be passionate about it and believe in it. If you are passionate about what you do, I think that you can see more possibilities before you."



Kate Summers

TECHNICAL EXECUTIVE – POWER OPERATIONS

■ CLASS OF 1979

Kate did not grow up thinking she would be an engineer. So, when she scored highly for mechanical aptitude on a careers survey, it created more questions than answers.

Growing up, Kate spent much of her time on the ski slopes and on her motorbike. After graduating from Mentone Girls' Grammar, Kate studied Outdoor Education at Bendigo College. She spent her twenties working the winters in the Australian and Austrian Alps, teaching alpine skiing.

At a ski-instructing course in Scotland, Kate met a female engineer. Kate had read books about feminism which challenged her to work towards a career that could contribute to making a difference.

“These books challenged me to think beyond the self-limitations that my upbringing had created. I needed to understand that other women had struggled in this frustrating place too.”

She decided to return to study and pursue Engineering. Kate did a bridging course at Caulfield Institute of Technology and transferred after her first year into Electrical Engineering at Swinburne.

In her third year, Kate won a scholarship through the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SECV), which led her to focus on power systems and control engineering. She graduated from Swinburne with Honours.

Kate had the privilege of working at the SECV where she received field experience and exposure to a range of electrical engineering areas prior to the electricity industry in Victoria being divided up and privatised. Kate has since spent time in system performance and control engineering, transmission planning, system operations and market development at both the Victorian Power Exchange and then National Electricity Market Management Company

(NEMMCO). In 2004, Kate started working in renewable energy, developing and operating wind farms and recently solar farms. She was the Technical Director on the board of the Australian Wind Energy Association and later the Chair of the Grid Directorate for the Clean Energy Council.

Recently, she completed significant control and protection upgrades for the remote East Kimberley Power System.

Kate is a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers Australia, a board member of The Electrical College and has been awarded National Professional Electrical Engineer of the Year (2020). She contributes to the national debate on the technical standards and integration of renewable energy both into the national electricity market (NEM) and physically into the power system. Her detailed technical submissions to government inquiries and to the Finkel Review about frequency control issues in the NEM has led to a national debate on the control of the electrical power system.

Kate combines a broad practical control knowledge of the power system and the integration of asynchronous wind and solar power plants with synchronous generation. Her recent work focused on elevating the role of power system control practises and highlighting where the market rules have caused an outcome that detracts from good engineering control practice.

“To me, engineering must now find ways to work with the Earth and not against it, and women must contribute significantly to bringing the civilising influence to humankind's endeavours. The passion I have for helping to build a more sustainable power system energises me to overcome barriers that I might face as a woman. Working in the renewable energy industry enhances my own sense of wellbeing. I could not imagine our mountains without snow, or the globe without its polar ice caps.”



Dr Kathleen McGuire

CONDUCTOR, DIRECTOR AND LECTURER

■ CLASS OF 1982

Dr Kathleen McGuire has excelled in the music industry since commencing at Mentone Girls' Grammar on an academic scholarship in 1977 and leaving in 1982 as House Captain of St Margaret's, Dux of the School and the inaugural recipient of Music Colours.

Kathleen has enjoyed a career spanning more than three decades in six countries. She has worked extensively as a conductor of orchestras and choirs, as well as ballet, opera and musical theatre companies, including performances at the Sydney Opera House, the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall.

She has earned multiple qualifications in conducting, composing and education, including a Master of Music degree with Distinction at the University of Surrey (UK) as a Rotary Ambassadorial Fellow, and Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Kathleen started honing her conducting skills at the age of 15 at St Augustine's Church in Mentone and also at Mentone Girls' Grammar.

"I was fortunate that music teacher John Browning allowed me to conduct the School's concert band, including some of my own compositions and arrangements. I have since offered similar experiences to my students. The music program was fledgling when I arrived at Mentone Girls' in 1977 and I'm proud to have been part of its growth as a student and then as a teacher in the early 1990s."

Since then, she has participated as a church musician, leader and teacher in schools and churches of multiple Christian denominations. For instance, she served as the Music Director at St Aidan's Episcopal Church in Boulder, Colorado (1996 – 2000) and Minister of Music at the Congregational Church of San Mateo in California (2011–2013). "With its Anglican tradition and Christian principles, Mentone Girls' Grammar influenced my motivation for using music as a means for change – for finding ways to help those in need."

Living in San Francisco for 13 years (2000 – 2013), Kathleen directed the 200-voice San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus and the Community Women's Orchestra, and founded Singers of the Street – a choir for people at risk of homelessness. She led a program that raised \$500,000 for health service organisations and volunteered as a rider and roadie in the AIDS Lifecycle, which raised millions of dollars.

Recognising her contributions to the community, "Kathleen McGuire Day" was designated twice, by San Francisco mayors Gavin Newsom (2010) and Ed Lee (2013).

After returning to Australia permanently in 2013, she was residential Director of Music at Queen's College – University of Melbourne, co-directed the School of Hard Knocks, and conducted Voices Without Borders – a choir of refugees. In 2014 she was the inaugural conductor of the Hallelujah Gospel Choir; which debuted at the Melbourne International Singers Festival, and in September 2016 she conducted one of her pieces, Street Requiem, at Carnegie Hall. Today, she lectures in the Faculty of Education and Arts at Australian Catholic University and directs the Tudor Choristers and the Star Chorale. One of Kathleen's most notable projects is *No Excuses!* – a choral suite for women's choir and instruments inspired by survivor's true stories of family violence. It was composed by Kathleen in collaboration with another Mentone Girls' Old Girl of renown: singer-songwriter Christina Green (1981).

"This highly personal work is about the positive outcomes that can occur when we stop making excuses. We don't want excuses from people who are committing violence and we don't want society or victims to make excuses for those people."

"Without exception, all the women Christina and I interviewed in gathering the stories for the songs wanted to leave audiences with a message of hope, encouraging others to stand up for themselves and share their stories," said Kathleen.

No Excuses! has been performed multiple times since the premiere in November 2015, including performances in Brisbane, Bendigo and Traralgon, introduced by Rosie Batty at Melbourne Recital Centre, and on ABC's program 'Breaking the Cycle'. In 2017, students at Mentone Girls' Grammar were fortunate to hear Kathleen's post-school journey and her many achievements, challenges and aspirations since leaving.

"It was an enormous honour to speak at Mentone Girls' Grammar's assembly on the topic of Action for Impact and also to enjoy the choir's lovely performance of one of my compositions. My 12 years at the School as a student and a teacher paved the way significantly for the years that were to follow in my career; being able to share my story with the students meant a great deal!"



Wendy Leegel

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

■ CLASS OF 1983

Wendy Leegel has spent years building a dynamic career. As current President of the Institute of Public Accountants (IPA) for the last two years, and a Director of the Board for over eight years, this global Accounting body has over 35,000 members in Australia and in over 70 countries overseas.

Wendy is a staunch supporter of the accounting profession and in particular promoting diversity, encouraging young women to consider the advantages of a career in accounting. In addition to her role as President of the IPA, Wendy is also President of the Institute of Financial Accountants (IFA), based in London.

Wendy has been the Executive Director of her own business, Leegel Consulting Group, a very successful consulting firm that specialises in mergers and acquisitions (M&A) integration, technology and global risk, as well as people transformation and workforce capability strategy. Previous roles include specialist consultant and executive with Transurban, Suncorp and Deakin University, Executive Manager for Change Suncorp Major Project Banking Platform Replacement, Head of Workforce Capability Global Markets, ANZ and Head of Capability Improvement Retail Bank with NAB.

Wendy believes much of her success comes from the education she received at Mentone Girls' Grammar: "I have achieved many of my goals because of the lessons I learned at the School from educators focused on building positive self-esteem, resilience, self confidence in one's self, goal setting, and diversity and tolerance of others as key success criteria."

Since leaving Mentone Girls' in 1983, Wendy has built an impressive career; not to mention completing four post graduate qualifications majoring in Business and Accounting and completing an MBA in Leadership with a Research Doctorate in Organisational Leadership, majoring in Change Management.

In addition, as an IPA member for 18 years, Wendy's involvement with accounting and professional bodies includes IPA Victorian Divisional Councillor 1999-2000 and 2006, holding the following Board positions of the IPA, Vice President, Deputy President, Chair of the Member Committee, Deputy Chair of the Disciplinary Committee, President and Chair of the Board and Director IFA (UK), and Retired Board Director of the Risk Management Institute of Australia (RMIA).

Wendy holds qualifications, nominals and memberships with the following associations; as a Fellow with Financial Services Institute of Australia (FINSIA), Australian Institute of Management (FAIM), Institute of Public Accountants (FIPA) and Chartered Management Institute (CMgr FCMI), Fellow Institute of Financial Accountants (FFA). She is also a member with Australian Institute of Company Directors (MAICD), Association of Change Management Professionals (MACMP), Australian Institute of Project Management (MAIPM), Risk Management Institute of Australia (MRMIA), Governance Institute of Australia GIA (Cert.), Member Change Management Institute (MCMII), Human Capital Institute (MHCI) and Women on Boards (MWOB).

When she attended Mentone Girls' Grammar, Wendy vividly remembers educators encouraging students to be goal orientated and to 'aim high'.

"No profession was ever out of bounds for Mentone Girls'. I have always believed that I am equal to any person in the workplace thanks to the positive reinforcement I received from educators and mentors and role models at the School. I have seen many women with limited goals and aspirations due to the 'programming' they received from a young age. Many women have hardwired their brains to limit their expectations because not enough educators challenged them to think beyond their own and societal expectations. I remember listening to my friends who were not at Mentone Girls' lower their goals as a result of the feedback and advice they received from the teachers and other adults around them. I even remember trying to rebuild their self-esteem and challenge those thoughts back then. Mentone Girls' Grammar always role modelled positive and ambitious diversity expectations, well before the term diversity was recognised as an issue restraining women wanting to achieve their brightest and most fulfilling future. It's interesting how there is now a real movement globally to reinforce and support leadership aspirations of women with programs such as 'Lean in' by Sheryl Sandberg, CEO of Facebook."

As a devoted wife, mother and mentor, Wendy has always been ready to give back for what she has received. "On a personal level, sponsoring two beautiful boys through World Vision has enriched our lives and provided more joy and happiness to our family than can be truly articulated. Our boys have helped us more than we have helped them, we understand happiness and joy is a derivative of helping others."



Sarah Derrington

HEAD OF SCHOOL AND DEAN OF LAW PROFESSOR

■ CLASS OF 1984

Professor Sarah Derrington has achieved national and international acclaim as a distinguished lawyer in the field of admiralty jurisdiction and marine insurance. In 2008 she became the first woman to be appointed a professor within the Law School and, in 2013, the first woman to be appointed Head of School and Dean of Law at The University of Queensland (UQ).

Sarah has excelled in her career with senior appointments including Member of the Boards of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, the Australian National Maritime Museum and the Australian Maritime College, Member of the Admiralty Rules Committee for the Commonwealth of Australia and former President of the Maritime Law Association of Australia and New Zealand.

“At School, I was always interested in music, history and languages and these remained important aspects throughout my life.”

After leaving Mentone Girls' Grammar in Year 6, Sarah spent four years at St Hilda's Southport before completing Senior School at St Margaret's Anglican Girls School in Brisbane. She then joined UQ and completed a Bachelor of Arts (in French & German) and a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) followed by a Master of Laws, and a Doctor of Philosophy in marine insurance law.

As an academic at the UQ Law School between 1994 and 2011, Sarah was Director of the Centre for Maritime Law and the Marine and Shipping Law Unit; Academic Advisor; Deputy Director of Studies (Law); Associate Professor; Professor of Admiralty Law; and Associate Dean (Academic) of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Law. Throughout this period she maintained her practice as a barrister specialising in maritime law.

In the past Sarah has also been a visiting professor to the University of Aix-Marseilles, France, and was a visiting lecturer

to the University of Nottingham from 2002 to 2006 where she taught International Carriage of Goods by Sea in the Master of Laws program.

Sarah's current research interests lie in the areas of admiralty jurisdiction and practice, the carriage of goods by sea and marine insurance. As co-rapporteur of two international working groups – one on cross-border insolvency interactions with admiralty actions in rem, and another on marine insurance – her work examines multijurisdictional approaches to the application of international principles of maritime law and their impact on domestic admiralty regimes.

Sarah says that her interest in this area of the law came from its unique combination of arcane rules, historical significance and international reach. “Focusing on the broad discipline of maritime law has given me the opportunity to combine my interest in history and languages with the law, which is fascinating indeed.”

Sarah was also a member of an interdisciplinary UQ research team that was successful in obtaining an ARC Super Science Fellowship for a project entitled, Defend or Retreat? Adapting to the impacts of sea level rise as a result of rapid climate change. The project sought to suggest ways in which aspects of marine insurance law principles might be adapted to the insurance of risks caused by climate change. Sarah's recent work has involved an examination of the origin and scope of the admiralty and maritime jurisdiction in the Australian Constitution.

Sarah's work has been widely published in some of the most distinguished Australian and International Maritime Law journals. She was also appointed a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law in 2009, and in 2013 was elected as a Fellow of the Nautical Institute.

Sarah hopes that, as a wife and mother of three children, she can inspire young professional women to persevere with their career ambitions. “It is important to recognise that developing a career is unlikely ever to be a straightforward path, however, diversions and challenges can lead to unexpected and wonderful opportunities.”



Nicole Bradtke

TENNIS CHAMPION AND COACH

■ CLASS OF 1987

We honour Nicole Bradtke (nee Provis) as a Remarkable Woman for her true ANZAC spirit, of never giving in, of taking risks and continually challenging herself to achieve her best.

Nicole was born in 1969. She joined Mentone Girls' Grammar School in 1982 and was remembered fondly by one of the School's longer serving staff members Mrs Marilyn Wiber, who said that Nicole was always an enthusiastic and energetic student who was well loved by her peers and a real joy to teach. For Nicole, her stand out memory for her school days was the level of support and commitment her teachers provided.

"I was living a different life to other students because I was constantly travelling with my tennis. There were times when I was away for up to six weeks. Even with this disruptive lifestyle, returning to School was always easy and welcoming because my teachers were so prepared to work with me to help me catch up. They certainly went above and beyond. Mentone Girls' Grammar School provided a solid foundation for me to come and go from. The friendships I made at School were also very important and enduring. My best friend today is the same best friend from School!"

Nicole's love of tennis began when she started playing at the age of seven. She played her first professional match in 1985 and made her debut at the Australian Open later that year. She found early success in mixed doubles, finishing runner-up at the 1987 Wimbledon Championships with Darren Cahill.

In 1988, Nicole burst into prominence when she made the semi-finals of the French Open. She beat two seeded players, Claudia Kohde-Kilsch and Sylvia Hanika, as well as Arantxa Sánchez Vicario (who had earlier beaten Chris Evert) before losing to Natasha Zvereva, despite holding two match points.

In 1992, she won the Australian Open and the US Open with her mixed doubles partner, Mark Woodforde. Together with partner Rachel McQuillan, she also won a bronze medal in Women's Doubles at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. The pair enjoyed wins against teams from Mexico, Brazil and Czechoslovakia before falling to Spain in the semi-final. Nicole also participated in the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, in both singles and doubles competitions.

In 1993, she won her second tour title in Kuala Lumpur and reached the fourth round of the Australian Open. She also earned her biggest career victory during that year, shockingly beating World Number 1 Steffi Graf in a Fed Cup tie. She later helped Australia to reach the final, where they lost to the Spanish team. In 1995, she earned another big victory over Gabriela Sabatini at the tournament in Berlin and returned to the top 40 in the world.

During her career, Nicole reached career-high rankings of number 25 in singles and number 11 in doubles. She retired from professional tennis in 1997 after a serious shoulder injury.

She married Australian Olympic Basketball great, Mark Bradtke, and they have two children, Austin and Jensen. Together they run a very successful indoor sports centre in Melbourne. Nicole also serves as a coach for the Australian Fed Cup team, and undertakes private coaching. In 2007, she joined the National High Performance Academy team.

Nicole has been an inspiration to many aspiring sports stars over the years. We are incredibly proud of her ongoing achievements and commitment to Australian Tennis.



Reena Ghelani

HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER

■ CLASS OF 1987

Reena works tirelessly to protect people and empower women who have suffered from conflict and disaster. She helps these women's voices be heard, putting them at the forefront of decision-making, designing and implementing projects and peace.

Reena currently works for the United Nations Office for Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as the Operations Director. The OCHA's mission is to coordinate the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in all humanitarian crises. As the Operations Director of OCHA, Reena is responsible for all field operations worldwide, supporting Humanitarian Coordinators and is the lead adviser to the Under-Secretary-General on operational decision-making.

"When you see the power of what humanitarian aid is: to be with front-line workers – nurses, doctors, vaccinators and people running refugee camps – who are literally helping people survive. That is what this job is all about. It is one of the most amazing privileges to work in humanitarian aid. I wake up every day and feel like I need to keep going because I know there is a need for our work."

Reena has held several roles within the United Nations office including the Deputy Director of the Coordination and Response Division (CRD), serving as the Chief of Middle East and North Africa operations (CRD), and various other capacities in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Prior to joining the OCHA, Reena held several assignments with the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Department of Peace Operations (DPKO), and has been a Protection/Human Rights Officer for the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA). She has also worked with the Australian Government's aid program.

Due to the nature of Reena's work, most of the projects she is involved with are highly confidential. However, some of her projects include food security in South Sudan; raising awareness

and funds for millions fleeing Congo; coordinating response efforts in Lebanon following the blasts that devastated Beirut; navigating a major crisis of people fleeing fighting in Syria and Ukraine; and response efforts relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Reena has also spent time in Afghanistan meeting with the Taliban, negotiating to gain a greater understanding of their intentions regarding the education and working rights of women.

This line of work is not for the faint-hearted and Reena does an incredible job of advocating for those who don't have a voice. Her all-girl education at Mentone Girls' Grammar helped cement Reena's drive to empower female humanitarians. "Women know their communities and their societies, and they know the right solutions. When you put women at the centre of designing programmes, you get a different kind of response. You know it will capture the most vulnerable."

"I have nothing but wonderful memories of my time at Mentone Girls' Grammar. The environment the teachers created allowed us to challenge ourselves and really reflect on who we are as people, how we can be our best and contribute to the world. Today I work frequently with communities who have literally nothing, but mostly only ask for one thing: education for their children so they have the foundations to change their life. A school where girls can thrive is the foundation to open opportunities and potential. Mentone Girls' was always this place for me."



Rakhee Ghelani

FREELANCE WRITER

■ CLASS OF 1990

Rakhee Ghelani chose to abandon the shackles of a corporate life for the freedom to pursue her love of travel. Now as a published freelance writer, Rakhee's extensive writing reflects her broad range of interests from travel, lifestyle and culture to food, business and science.

Rakhee has also worked on two books, an autobiography that deals with life choices, loss, grief and travel, and a semi-biographical work that looks at the migration of Indians to East Africa.

At School Rakhee became involved in a wide variety of activities, including drama productions, debating and the House softball team.

"I was able to take advantage of the many different opportunities available at Mentone Girls' Grammar to explore my passions and interests."

After graduating from Mentone Girls' in 1990, Rakhee went on to study at the University of Melbourne, graduating in 1995 with a double degree Bachelor of Laws (Honours) and Bachelor of Commerce. For the next 16 years she pursued a corporate career specialising first in international taxation before moving into strategic development. She worked with some of Australia's blue chip companies including ANZ Bank, General Motors Holden and Foster's Group.

While her career was fulfilling and demanding she always took time out to pursue her love of travel. She travelled to many continents, mostly solo, including Africa, South America and Asia.

Despite her professional achievements, Rakhee felt the need to pursue a different life and in 2011 she took the very brave step away from the corporate world for good. She packed up her house, put everything she owned into storage and left Australia with a backpack to travel across India. For 10 months she travelled solo across the country, exploring 16 states and territories and visiting over 70 towns and cities. Not ready to return to Australia, she settled in Mumbai.

While she was travelling, Rakhee started to write a travel blog and soon received offers to publish her writing. Settling in Mumbai, Rakhee took the opportunity to reinvent her professional life and now runs a small corporate content business called The Content Arc and continues to work as a freelance writer, focusing on her greatest love, travel. She is regularly featured in a vast array of online blogs, travel columns and print publications including The Australian, BBC Good Food Magazine, Eatability food magazine, Forbes Travel Guide, Holiday Homes Times and more.

"Although Mumbai is my base, I am very fortunate to have a career that is now location independent, and one that allows me to travel frequently. I have now seen all but three states in India and well over 100 towns and cities. I have been able to travel extensively visiting many different countries, but I think one of my highlights was 'working' while sailing on a yacht with friends around the Turkish coast." She also travelled to Myanmar and was pleasantly surprised to bump into her old Geography teacher, Mrs Marilyn Wiber, over breakfast!

Rakhee is now embarking on a new adventure, that of motherhood, having adopted a little girl from India. Several of her friends include women she studied with at Mentone Girls', who have remained a strong support network during her time overseas.

To read more of Rakhee's adventures, visit:
www.rakheeghelani.com



Dr Manjusha Thorpe

COMMERCIALISATION MANAGER

■ CLASS OF 1991

Reflecting on the 29 years since she graduated from Mentone Girls' Grammar, Dr Manjusha Thorpe's ethos – learning to seek out and accept as many opportunities as possible, no matter how challenging – became ingrained from her years at School.

"While relishing in the academic offerings of Mentone Girls' Grammar, I took up as many co-curricular opportunities as I could. A very exciting moment was being part of Grammar's Year 12 winning relay team at the School Athletics."

Dr Thorpe developed a passion for mathematics, science and Japanese before pursuing a degree in Chemical Engineering and Japanese at Monash University. She was awarded a position in the graduate program of ICI Australia (now Orica) and her journey of taking leadership roles in the development and adoption of new engineering technologies was in full swing. She recruited and managed teams in the construction and commissioning of new process technologies at chemical plants in Borneo, Indonesia and Australia.

She flourished in her leadership roles, managing the Singapore office of a global consulting company that benchmarks performance of international multi-million-dollar capital projects across a range of industries. She later returned to university to complete her PhD in Engineering at the University of Cambridge.

One key focus area of Dr Thorpe's PhD was identifying strategies for successfully scaling up industrial biotechnology processes. These processes focused on achieving greater levels of environmental sustainability. The processes utilised renewable raw materials, renewable energy sources and had lower levels of energy consumption.

"The agriculture industry needs to grow in an ethical manner to provide the food needed by an increasing population. I am focusing on being able to re-use biomass from farms and at the same time, increase the use of renewable energy sources in the agriculture industry."

She was employed by the University of Cambridge as a guest lecturer in the Engineering department and as a Research Associate, establishing a new strand of research on the enablers of scale up.

Mentone Girls' Grammar instilled in Dr Thorpe the value of education, community and friendship. She considers education as an enabler of life-changing opportunities and has spent a year teaching English in remote Japan. She volunteers at a primary school in Perth as part of CSIRO's STEM Professionals in Schools program, a national program that facilitates partnerships between schools and industry to bring real STEM into the classroom. She has also been the Newsletter Editor and Treasurer for the Cleft Palate and Lip Society of Western Australia.

"I made many strong, supportive and lasting friendships at Mentone Girls' Grammar and I would especially like to thank Dr Michelle Lee. Michelle and I became best friends in Year 7 and Michelle's inspiration allowed me to become an inductee in the Hall of Fame. I am appreciative of the countless opportunities I had at the School and above all, I am grateful to my parents who worked hard so that I could pursue these opportunities."



Dr Sarah Miller

CLINICAL AND FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGIST

■ CLASS OF 1992

Dr Sarah Miller has received international acclaim for her work as a Clinical and Forensic Psychologist. She has specific expertise in the humanitarian sector and with trauma counselling, and is the only Australian Clinical Psychologist on the delegation list for deployment by the International Committee of the Red Cross to provide psychological assistance in response to natural disasters and in conflict zones.

At School, Sarah always wanted to help people. "I knew very early on that my career would lead me in a direction where I could assist people who have found themselves in difficult circumstances and to help make a difference to their lives. Mentone Girls' Grammar not only instilled those values of working hard and contributing meaningfully to society; it provided me with a strong friendship base to see me through life. More than 20 years on I still have close relationships with my school friends."

After Year 12, Sarah completed a degree and Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology. She worked for private companies in organisational psychology, change management and training, and spent time living and working overseas. In 2004, she returned to Australia to follow her passion and complete a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. "My Doctorate related to cross cultural mental health, as I have a special interest in cross cultural issues, human rights and international humanitarian law."

Sarah has assisted people living in extreme conditions, taken on extraordinary work and lived in some very difficult environments. Her professional challenges have been immense, including work in the drug and alcohol field, acute psychiatric assessment and treatment in prisons, and with young people at the Royal Children's Hospital. Sarah has also helped children who had been physically or sexually abused in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. She has also held humanitarian roles with the International Red Cross Movement following the floods in Pakistan, the massacre in Norway, and the earthquake in Christchurch, as well as many domestic disasters including the Queensland floods and Victorian bushfires.

Through Sarah's exemplary work at Port Phillip Prison, she was promoted after just nine months to manage, train and supervise a team of psychologists in the high intensity prison environment. Sarah co-developed a program for violent prisoners held in seclusion cells who were considered too high risk to participate in behavioural programs and to mix in group therapeutic activities. The program aimed to teach prisoners anger management strategies, alternatives to violence and empathy. The program was so successful that many of the inmates expressed considerable remorse over their crimes. Sarah presented her findings at an international conference, and the British Psychological Society invited her to showcase her work in the UK.

"I could see such a need for psychology services that during my time at the Prison, I started my own private psychology practice out of work hours. I took referrals from the psychiatric section of the Alfred Hospital, the courts, doctors and a number of other agencies."

Through her work as a Clinical Psychologist, and later Mental Health Team Leader at the Australian Immigration Detention Centres, Sarah wrote a paper which highlighted the unfavourable living conditions some asylum seekers are forced to endure, and this contributed to alterations in the regimes and resources provided on Christmas Island. She also delivered presentations to immigration, security and medical staff about human rights law and working in a therapeutic way with people across cultures.

Sarah overtook humanitarian work in the Philippines in the aftermath of typhoon Haiyan. She worked seven days a week for two months providing trauma counselling to adults and children. The resources she developed were then presented to the International Committee of the Red Cross head office in Geneva.

Sarah's list of professional achievements are immense and reflect the incredible difference she has made to the lives of so many.



Dr Pratiti (Mimi) Bandopadhayay

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, LABORATORY HEAD,
UNIVERSITY LECTURER AND PAEDIATRIC
NEURO-ONCOLOGIST

■ CLASS OF 1994

Dr Pratiti (Mimi) Bandopadhayay dedicates almost every waking hour to the pursuit of finding a cure for incurable paediatric brain tumours.

As a world leader in her field, Dr Bandopadhayay's team has been behind ground-breaking discoveries. She runs her own lab at Harvard University called Bandopadhayay Lab, which consists of a small research team that focuses on finding treatments for children suffering with brain tumours.

In addition to her efforts in the lab, Dr Bandopadhayay is a member of the clinical paediatric neuro-oncology team in the Dana-Farber/Boston Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Center, contributing to the care of children with brain tumours. These children are a constant motivation for her to undertake translational research that is dedicated to improving the outcomes of children diagnosed with paediatric brain tumours.

"Horrible circumstances can sometimes bring out the best in people. The families I work with go far beyond their own child's life-threatening situation and continue to support other children and families who are in similar circumstances. The families are my inspiration to keep going even though my job is filled with traumatising instances."

Dr Bandopadhayay continues to treat patients at the Dana-Farber in Boston, largely considered the world's best facility for treating paediatric brain tumours. She also serves as an assistant professor of paediatrics at the Harvard Medical School and is an associate member of the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard.

Born and raised in Australia, Dr Bandopadhayay graduated from Mentone Girls' Grammar in 1994. From a family of doctors, she wanted to excel in the STEM fields and undertook three science subjects in VCE, leading her to study Medicine at Monash University, followed by a PhD at The University of Melbourne. She did specialty training in paediatrics and hematology/oncology at the Royal Children's Hospital and Monash Medical Centre, Melbourne, and the Australasian College of Physicians, followed by further training in paediatric neuro-oncology under the mentorship of Dr David Ashley.

Dr Bandopadhayay joined the team at the Dana-Farber/Boston Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Center in 2011, completing subspecialty training in paediatric neuro-oncology under the guidance of Dr Mark Kieran. She then took post-doctoral training at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Broad Institute under the mentorship of Dr Rameen Beroukhi.

"Many brain tumours do not have cures. We now have the tools and resources to find treatments and cures. The most effective treatment is surgery and then radiation, yet radiation can hinder children from ever learning again – which is not a cure at all."

"What I need in my job is hope. My patients give me that hope every day to make what seems impossible, possible."



Zoe Badwi

SINGER SONGWRITER

■ CLASS OF 1996

Singing sensation Zoe Badwi has stormed the impossibly difficult and unforgiving music industry and made a lasting impression with her vocal talents and dynamic stage presence.

Zoe remembers dreaming of a future on stage at School.

"All I knew then was that I loved singing and performing and I understood it. Mentone Girls' Grammar encourages you to be your own person. I wasn't an academic genius or an angel, but I remember the beautiful campus, the caring teachers, and the way they would help you learn from your mistakes. They had a way of guiding you rather than ruling you and that was very important to me."

After leaving School, Zoe joined the ABC and had a role in the series *Raw FM*. She played the character of an aspiring singer. Her first real break happened when she teamed up with girl band, *Sirens*, launching her career with two Australian top ten hits.

In 2008, after branching off to pursue her solo career, Zoe's debut single, *Release Me*, became the hit record of the summer. It dominated the number one spot on the ARIA Club Chart for 12 weeks, earning her ARIA and APRA nominations. To this day the single is still played extensively worldwide. Throughout 2009, the magic continued as her collaboration with TV ROCK, *In The Moment* and *Don't Wanna*, blitzed the Top 10 of the ARIA Club Chart and firmly cemented her as a major talent in the industry.

In 2010, she produced the anthemic triple platinum record, *Freefallin'*, that stormed its way into the top 10 ARIA Singles and Airplay Charts, topping the ARIA Club and iTunes Dance Charts, and clocking up over two million video views on YouTube. It also scored Zoe a prestigious APRA Award in the Dance Release of the Year category.

With creative talent behind her like 'The Squared Division' who directed and choreographed her video clip, Zoe has been in good hands. The duo also worked with the likes of Britney Spears, Ke\$ha, X Factor and American Idol. "I feel so lucky; I just can't believe that I can get up on stage and sing a song that I've written and there's 40,000 people shouting the words right back at me. It is the most incredible feeling." *Freefallin'* also grabbed the attention of top labels around the world including Warner Music UK and Sony Music France, but it was the prolific Atlantic Records in the US who signed Zoe in 2010.

Since then, her stardom has continued to rise with more top 20 ARIA hits and her highly anticipated self-titled album *Zoe*. She has spent time touring Australia and performed all over the world including Brazil, UK, USA, and throughout Europe. She has signed publishing deals to write songs for other performers and has added acting to her portfolio with numerous television appearances.

Zoe has since enjoyed continued success, with her track, *Torches*. The track sees Zoe pairing up with fellow Australian producers, Denzal Park, for the first time since her triple-platinum selling hit *Freefallin'* in 2011. *Torches* first premiered as part of Mardi Gras' official season trailer video on YouTube, and was then used as the soundtrack for the Mardi Gras season events which were attended by thousands of people from around Australia and overseas. It is one of the largest festivals in the world and also one of Australia's biggest tourist draw cards in terms of economic impact. Zoe also performed the track for the first time live at the Mardi Gras parade afterparty in front of over 30,000 partygoers.

Zoe's advice to current students is simple. "The hardest part is finding your dream – but once you have, just keep chasing it. There will be people who will knock you down along the way. The trick is not to let them win, to work hard and prove them wrong." The reward, believes Zoe, is living your own dream.



Christine Melis

BARRISTER, LEGAL ADVOCATE AND TEACHER

■ CLASS OF 1998

Years after leaving Mentone Girls' Grammar, Christine Melis (1998) still finds herself reminiscing about her days at School.

Christine's memories flood back. "...sitting in the sun in the Rose Garden; singing songs from Aladdin in choir; doing imitations from last night's episode of the comedy show *Full Frontal* in the Year 12 centre; dressing up at House Athletics Carnival and leaving the classroom after my last VCE exam. So many images and sounds. But what is loudest in my mind is the laughter – so much laughter."

Christine studied Arts/Law at Monash University after leaving School and working in a law firm. Christine realised she wasn't feeling as passionate for her work as she previously had for her study at school and university.

"It was at that moment that I understood the importance of taking risks and listening to my 'gut'."

Christine left her job and accepted an Associateship with a Supreme Court Judge. There she reinvigorated her passion for Law and found the mentorship she needed. During this time she was the Convenor of Victorian Women Lawyers.

Christine made the decision to go to the Victorian Bar after her Associateship.

One of Christine's biggest cases was the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission as Junior Counsel for the State of Victoria. That brief led to inquests on behalf of Victoria Police. Christine also worked on a negligence class action involving the spread of a herpes-like virus carried by abalone across the Victorian Coastline and another matter involving the escape of methane gas into a residential housing estate. Christine also felt privileged to have worked on the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse.

In 2014 Christine moved to Sydney and joined the NSW Bar, expanding her practice of law to another jurisdiction. At this time she also joined the panel of counsel representing asylum seekers in Nauru in their legal bids to be recognised as genuine refugees. Her work in the Pacific region further expanded, taking on matters in the Solomon Islands.

During this time, Christine continued her work with advancing women in the law, serving on the board of Australian Women Lawyers for four years, including as its Vice President.

When Christine first travelled to PNG in 2014 she was immediately drawn to learning more about the culture of this society, its complex societal structures and the many barriers faced by women. "I was inspired to think of ways the Victorian Bar could extend its advocacy workshops to incorporate a program about empowering women to enter the law, stay in the law and progress to having satisfying careers in the law. I saw the program as a vehicle through which to increase the number of women in senior and leadership roles, on the bench and in parliament and in tackling major issues affecting women and children, in particular, domestic violence." And she made it happen.

The program is called 'Empowering Women in the Law in PNG' and is the first of its kind. It gives women legal trainees the opportunity to participate in a weekend of discussions and presentations dedicated to building confidence and empowering women entering the law.

"I want to work on more initiatives around empowering women all over the world. I want to work on human rights cases both here and overseas. I want to continue to teach advocacy both here and overseas. Advocacy is my passion. I will use it to the best of my ability to make a meaningful change in people's lives, social justice movements and the fight for gender equality all over the world."



Dr Suzie Sheehy

ACCELERATOR PHYSICIST

■ CLASS OF 2001

Dr Suzie Sheehy has always been passionate about science. It was thanks to a few inspiring teachers like Mrs Carla Whiting (who taught her specialist maths) and Mr Matt Jones (physics) that Suzie realised how rewarding it could be to rise to the challenge of tackling problems that she initially found difficult.

At School she got her first taste of applying maths and science to the real world when her Year 6 teacher (Mrs Moragh Tyler) invited her to participate in the model solar car program. Over the years at School she had national success in the competition and this encouraged her to continue studying maths and science.

Suzie fondly remembers Mentone Girls' Grammar as a learning environment that encouraged her interests, despite the fact that physics was the subject that she found most challenging. "I'll never forget some of my high school physics lessons. One lesson the whole class went out to the staff car park to lift dumpsters using levers and in another we were all out on the sports field to hear sound waves interfering for ourselves."

Since leaving School in 2001, Suzie has achieved international acclaim for her ground-breaking work in the area of accelerator physics. She obtained a first class honours degree in physics from the University of Melbourne, during which she spent six months working at CERN (home of the Large Hadron Collider).

Inspired by that experience, she moved to the UK and completed a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the University of Oxford in 2010. During her PhD she worked on designing a new type of particle accelerator for cancer treatment using protons and light ions, as part of the 'PAMELA' project.

Suzie was then awarded the prestigious 2010 Brunel Research Fellowship from the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851. From 2010 to 2015 she was based at the STFC Rutherford Appleton Lab (RAL), where she worked on designing new

and challenging high power proton accelerators for future applications. She re-joined the University of Oxford in April 2015 in a joint appointment with STFC/RAL to continue her research on high power proton accelerators and to teach graduate accelerator physics. Suzie also lectures at the CERN Accelerator School and at specialist Accelerator Schools in Japan.

Alongside her research, Suzie is passionate about the promotion and communication of Science, for which she has received a number of awards. In 2010 she received the esteemed British Science Association Lord Kelvin Award and the University of Oxford Vice Chancellor's Civic Award for her work in presenting science to school and public audiences. In 2014, 2015 and 2016 she co-presented large headline shows at the UK's largest science fair (the Big Bang Fair) to audiences of 1,500 people alongside TV presenter and food writer Stefan Gates.

Suzie is regularly invited to present lectures at the Royal Institution, Institute of Physics and other prestigious organisations. She's even given public lectures in Japan and Australia, squeezed in to various travels for her research.

"As a scientist it's important to me to share the exciting work we're doing with the public and young people. In particular, I enjoy presenting science for live audiences in an interactive and engaging way. Who'd have thought my performing arts experience would come in handy as a scientist? I'm also increasingly aware that I'm acting as a role model for young women. Only roughly ten percent of accelerator physicists are female, so I want to share my passion for the subject with as many people as possible, break down those old stereotypes and inspire others into this fascinating field. It has been a joy to meet and mentor young women from school age through to PhD level."



Alisha Withers

COMMANDER, ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

■ CLASS OF 2001

Over the last 20 years, Alisha Withers has forged a very successful career with the Royal Australian Navy. From protecting our borders to training and educating new recruits, Alisha has seen many facets of the Navy. Her commendable career is one to celebrated and honoured.

At the age of nine, Commander Alisha Withers' family settled down to life in Melbourne, after her father left the Navy. Accustomed to Navy life and the values that go along with it, Alisha's parents instilled in her a strong sense of service, thirst for adventure and determination. These qualities, coupled with the education she received at Mentone Girls' Grammar, served Alisha well when she joined the Royal Australian Navy upon graduating in 2002.

"I grew up not being interested in following my parents' footsteps, (but) it became the natural choice when I had started thinking seriously about my future."

Upon joining the Navy in 2002, Alisha conducted her initial officer training at HMAS Creswell, followed by six months at sea. In 2003, she commenced further studies at the Australian Defence Force Academy, graduating with a Bachelor of Science (Mathematics and Oceanography). A thirst for further training resulted in Alisha attaining a Masters of Military and Defence Studies from the Australian War College.

Since becoming a qualified Maritime Warfare Officer in 2007, Alisha has qualified as a Fighter Controller, an Officer of the Watch, an Air Intercept Controller (AIC), a Principle Warfare Officer specialising in air warfare and has conducted numerous operational deployments and exercises.

Some of her deployments include the Middle East Area of Operations SLIPPER, Operation RESOLUTE on multiple occasions and major exercises including RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific), Talisman Sabre and the Royal Canadian Navy's International Fleet

Review. During her tenure she has also served in HMAS Canberra (II), Melville, Ipswich, Sydney and Newcastle, and been the Commanding Officer of HMAS Maitland.

Being in command of HMAS Maitland, Commander Alisha led her crew conducting Border Protection roles in the northern approaches to Australia.

"The highlight of my almost 20 years in the Navy is my two years in Command of HMAS Maitland, from 2014-2016. This incredibly rewarding and challenging experience enabled me to hone my leadership skills and gave me the confidence to strive for my next Command."

In 2016, Alisha became the Fleet Direction Officer for Sea Training Group, responsible for on the job training of operations teams, before proceeding to the Australian Command and Staff College in Canberra in 2019.

By 2020, Commander Alisha was the Personal Staff Officer to the Deputy Chief of Navy and assumed the position of Current Operations Planner for the South West Pacific in Headquarters Joint Operations Command the following year. Alisha is currently the Commander of the Royal Australian Navy Recruit School.



Dr Bao Nguyen

VISUAL NEUROSCIENTIST, OPTOMETRIST
AND LECTURER

■ CLASS OF 2002

Dr Bao Nguyen is a researcher in human visual neuroscience, an optometrist and a lecturer in optometry and vision sciences at The University of Melbourne.

Dr Nguyen commenced her secondary schooling at Mentone Girls' Grammar on an academic scholarship in 1997. She graduated as Dux of the School – achieving the top 0.15 percent of students in the State, won Year 12 Prizes for English, Mathematics and Languages, the Monash Prize for Dux of Year 11 and the Years 10 and 11 Prizes in French and Japanese.

“What I experienced first hand at Mentone Girls' Grammar, was the celebration of women and their achievements in every space. Empowered women empower others.”

Her journey to success consisted of many detours. It took three attempts to finally settle into a clinical, entry-to-practice degree at The University of Melbourne.

“Mentone Girls' Grammar encouraged young ‘renaissance’ women to be well-rounded and play to their strengths. I chose to focus on subjects that I loved and therefore excelled at, which, in hindsight, was critical for my success and my sanity.”

While pursuing optometry as her degree, she also completed a Graduate Diploma of Modern Languages. In both fields, she graduated top of her class. Dr Nguyen was inspired by the sole female academic at that time in the Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences to undertake a Doctorate of Philosophy.

Dr Nguyen's PhD research uncovered vision anomalies in people who suffer from episodic migraines and why the brain might be susceptible to migraine attacks. Her research has moved from understanding how healthy ageing and childhood development affect vision and the brain, to deciphering the commonalities between healthy ageing and pathological ageing in people with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), to developing and running clinical trials for new vision testing devices.

Dr Nguyen has published scientific papers in top-ranking peer-reviewed journals in the fields of Ophthalmology, Neuroscience, Psychopharmacology, Clinical Neurology and Multidisciplinary Sciences. In 2017, she was the first optometrist to win a BioMedVic Early Career Clinician Researcher Award in Allied Health. The award provided \$130,000 in competitive grant funding, including a Melbourne Neuroscience Institute Fellowship to conduct world-first imaging of the optic nerve using the most advanced magnetic resonance imaging techniques available in only two locations in Australia.

She has returned to Mentone Girls' Grammar to speak about career choices and provide mentorship to budding scientists in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

“Educating girls is the key to tackling the world's pressing problems. I came from a refugee background, with a narrow focus on survival, to realising my potential to make a greater contribution to society thanks to my education at Mentone Girls' Grammar. I am proud to be a career woman, a mother and an educator, and I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to tell my story and inspire others.”



Neary Ty

TELEVISION REPORTER

■ CLASS OF 2005

Neary Ty is a television reporter for the Nine Network and was the first Asian Reporter to be hired for the Network in Melbourne.

After School, Neary completed a Bachelor of Media and Communications majoring in Journalism at Deakin University. She focused on her passions and interests – writing and news. As a child, Neary was intrigued by true crime television shows. In 2010, when Neary’s mother was injured in a hit and run, while being interviewed by the Leader Newspaper, Neary was asked by a journalist to complete some work experience at the paper. Neary began a two-week internship with the Moreland Leader. Her journalism career started with the local newspaper, writing, researching, conducting interviews and sourcing stories.

Neary became a freelance property writer for various Leader Newspapers and also undertook work experience at Dolly Magazine and Cleo Magazine in Sydney. She then completed work experience, shadowing reporters at WIN TV in Ballarat and then Nine News Melbourne in 2012. It was here where she fell in love with the craft and people and was soon offered a job.

In her role as a Communications Coordinator, Neary was responsible for listening out for any breaking news while keeping in touch with the MFB, Police and Ambulance media liaisons. It was a fast paced and intense job to find the news first and to relay accurate information to the Chief of Staff so they could dispatch reporters, cameramen and news helicopter. She was then promoted to the News Library, then to Chief of Staff Assistant before being promoted once again within a year to News Producer.

As News Producer Neary flourished with her nose for the news, writing scripts, shortlisting stories and helping reporters on the road. She also wrote late newsbreaks for Peter Hitchener and voice-overs for all daytime and 6:00pm bulletins. During this time

Neary was given the opportunity to do some reporting, before being offered a full-time reporting role in 2015 and becoming the first Asian reporter at Nine News Melbourne.

While the role of TV journalist is seen as a glamorous job by many, Neary knows the reality is hard work and long days.

“Those who do it enjoy the chase and the people they meet. The job never gets boring; whether it’s your colleagues from other networks or the strangers you meet everyday.” Reflecting back on her career so far Neary says it’s all about hard work and determination.

“Hard work does pay off. It doesn’t matter where you come from or who you are, if you want something, go and get it.”

Neary has reported on several hard-hitting news stories over the years, including the Bourke Street tragedy. She continues to be inspired by the many incredible, kind and generous people she meets along the way.

Reflecting on her years at Mentone Girls’ Grammar, she’s thankful she attended an all girls’ school. It allowed her to try different things, like swimming, dancing or performing arts, without the pressure of being judged or feeling embarrassed. She appreciates the School culture of acceptance and encouragement, which helped to instil a confidence and determination in Neary, who knows that she can achieve anything if she sets her mind to it.





REMARKABLE
WOMEN
HALL OF FAME



EST. 1899

MENTONE GIRLS'
GRAMMAR