



St Andrew's College

Founders' Day Assembly – Rector's Address

Christine Leighton

Friday 17 March 2023



Kia ora koutou katoa
Tuhia ki te rangi
Tuhia ki te whenua
Tuhia ki te ngākau ō ngā tangata
Ko te mea nui, Ko te Ātua
Ko te Ātua, Ko te āroha
Tihei mauriora.
Tena koutou tena koutou

Tena koutou katoa.

Welcome to you all on this 106th Founders' Day for St Andrew's College, and a special welcome to parents, whānau and guests.

It is hard to believe it is six years since we celebrated our College Centenary, when those of you presently in Year 13 were in Year 7.

Founders' Day is a day when we take the opportunity to reminisce, reflect upon our College in days gone by, remember some of our history and give thanks for what we enjoy today. Special guests with us this morning are Board Chair, Mrs Felicity Odlin, Old Collegian, Mr Tuu'u, and his father Alae has also joined us, along with OCA President, Sam Crosbie. Other Board Members present are Alan Merry, Peter Nelson and Stephanie Bain.

On Founders' Day weekend it is a tradition that a year group of Old Collegians gather to share memories and friendships that have continued over 60 years. This year, due to COVID-19 cancellations last year, we have combined two year groups. Seventy-two gentlemen have returned to St Andrew's College to remember their time here. Most began in their third form year (Year 9) in 1962 or 1963. A number are in our assembly this morning and I extend a very warm welcome to you all.

I also recognise Old Collegian Mr Nick Davidson from the 1962 Form 3 group, who will be presenting the 1st XI cricket caps later in today's assembly. Mr Davidson is a retired High Court Judge and King's Counsel. He is President of The Willows Cricket Club with whom St Andrew's College has a strong association and as a right arm medium pace bowler he was the winner of the 1st XI bowling award in 1966.

Before we begin the awards I would like to acknowledge all those of you involved with various events and competitions over the last seven weeks. There have been many successes particularly in Year 10 cricket, tennis, rowing, girls' futsal, swimming, athletics plus a lot of activity in cultural pursuits, including the Pasifika group who gave a wonderful performance to whānau and friends at the Fiafia Night on Wednesday.

Thank you to the Pipe Band for playing outside Strowan House as we gathered for assembly this

morning.

Last week 72 students took part in the Pipe Band Nationals held here in Ōtautahi where they enjoyed great support and impressive success. The B Band finished third overall in Grade 4A. The A Band were very competitive in Grade 2, coming second to an adult band from Australia. In the Juvenile Grade, the A Band was once again dominant winning the first place medals and the combined B and C Bands with 50 students placed sixth in the Juvenile Grade.

The Canterbury Caledonian Pipe Band were the winners of Grade 1, making them the Premiere Band of New Zealand. Pipe Band Director, Richard Hawke, and tutors Graeme Bryce, Jamie McEwan and Scott Birrell are all members of this band. No wonder our St Andrew's band has long been recognised as the top school band in New Zealand!

I would now like to invite members of the A Band to come forward to receive their medals.

I would like to take this opportunity also to congratulate Year 11 piper, Tayla Eagle who has been selected to spend two weeks at Haileybury College in Melbourne next month where she will join with their Pipe Band to compete in the Championships of Victoria.

And so now for some St Andrew's history.

Yesterday in Chapel you heard a great story from our Museum Archivist and Curator, Mrs Dinsenbacher, about the remarkable man who founded our College – Rev. Alexander Thompson. Now I would like you to try to picture St Andrew's College of the 1960s. The roll of 650 boys (1000 fewer than our total roll today) are a sea of grey uniforms.

185 boarders eat at long tables in the dining room and Mr Ian Galloway in 1962 has just started as Rector – a position he will hold for 21 years.

In boarding there is no heating or air conditioning in rooms apart from the odd fireplace in Strowan. Some boarders sleep on the upstairs balcony of Strowan House with nothing more than a canvas blind between them and the winter night sky.

The Rector, Mr Galloway, would have an inspection of the boarders bed making at 8.30am each Sunday morning and would don a full military uniform to affect this highly important routine. Rector Ian Galloway served in WWII in the Pacific and Italy and had impressive military bearing.

Of course, sport was very important to many of the boys in the 1960s – however there were only 12 sports to choose from compared with the 26 on offer today.

Some things began at St Andrew's College in the 1960s that have remained important part of our College.

The first students began their Duke of Edinburgh award in 1964 and we are very proud that St Andrew's can now boast 190 students who have completed their Gold award since that time.

In 1965 the Castle Hill Mountain Lodge opened, giving generations of city boys their first taste of outdoor adventuring. Fortunately, the Lodge had a significant upgrade in 2008 with the opening of new Alistair Sidey Mountain Lodge. Today, the Castle Hill Outdoor Education programme remains an integral part of a St Andrew's education contributing many memorable moments and tall stories to the St Andrew's experience over 60 years.

In 1965 the Pipe Band, which had started at the College right back in 1919, was strong, with 101 boys learning the pipes and drums. This compares with the 150 learners today.

Of our guests here this weekend 11 were members of the Pipe Band. Indeed, I have just learned that Old Collegian Philip Sapsford – also a lawyer and King's Counsel who has come over from his home in Switzerland, was a piper and the Drum Major in 1966. 1966 was a big year for St Andrew's College – the

50th Jubilee. This is the year when Gym 1 was built, which was described in the school magazine as “a magnificent hall and gymnasium”.

On a more salutary note, eight boys were suspended and in 1966 seven boys were expelled for drinking offences. Some of our guests today may remember that also in 1966 the Senior basketball team won the U20 grade of the Men’s Indoor Basketball Association for the first time, a victory they repeated in 1967. Now of course our Physical Education Department and sports teams enjoy two full sized gymnasiums and a large, well equipped fitness centre which is very popular with today’s students.

In 1966 St Andrew’s rowed in the Maadi Cup for the first time at Lake Waihola near Dunedin. Thirteen students were the first to complete their Gold Duke of Edinburgh award and Rutherford won the House competition.

I am sure our Old Collegians in assembly this morning who wore the Rutherford colours will be pleased to know they were again winners of the highly coveted Athletics Day title a couple of weeks ago.

Now we come to 1967, when our group from third form 1963 were in their final year (if they stayed to the seventh form).

Every Old Collegian who returns to St Andrew’s College from the 1940s, 50s and 60s remembers the much-loved history teacher Mrs Pocock known for her fascinating stories, fashionable elegance and interest in her students. Mrs Pocock left the College in 1967 leaving many budding historians in her wake.

I was intrigued to see the College magazine also took to print opinion about the need to take a stand on boys’ haircuts.

I quote the words from over 60 years ago, “both in the school and in the home, these comparatively minor points on personal discipline really do matter and where they are neglected neither a school nor a home can carry real freedom. If the little points of discipline are looked after and dealt with as they occur, the larger issues in the main will look after themselves”.

I have certainly been a party to similar conversations around uniform and grooming of students today.

And so, here we are 60 years later, a school of 1600 students and a group of gentlemen who were in your shoes 60 years ago.

There is no doubt that our school and the world has changed but the world of good teachers, engaging learning, pipe bands, outdoor education, personal challenge, service and the Duke of Edinburgh award, sporting and cultural experiences and the making of great friendships are as important as ever.

Thank you Old Collegians of 1962 and 1963 for coming back to your school this weekend, bringing your stories and your learnings from life. And thank you to the students of 2023 who continue to value our traditions and create our College culture, remembering the old, embracing the new and making sure that in 2023 and beyond with the encouragement of our current Head Prefects, “Blue and White – we do it right”.