



St Bede's Old Collegians Association

Roll of Honour Citations 2015

***Written and presented by Allan Drummond
at the Roll of Honour Dinner May 2015***

Brother Colman Molloy

Colman was a foundation member of the St Bede's community of Brothers, having previously taught at the Brothers' school in Dubbo, NSW. Initially, he taught Latin and French to senior students, an important task when study of a language at higher secondary levels was a prerequisite for university entrance. This special interest in languages Colman shared with Brother Finian who would join the staff in 1943.

Despite reasonable success at public exams in the first two or three years of the College, parents tended to send their offspring to De La Salle, whose reputation under Brother Jerome, was very high. So, as St Bede's grew threefold in its first ten years, its reputation for scholarship did not. Then, in 1948, Colman became principal, taking over from the somewhat erratic Irishman, Brother Julian Lennon. Colman's mission was to raise standards and stop the brain drain to Malvern.

The new principal had many qualities that eminently suited him for positions of leadership. He was clear-headed. He was well organised. He was intelligent and decisive. He could also be blunt. I well remember him teaching Religious Education to yours truly, which included St Thomas Aquinas's five arguments for the existence of God. Looking back, Thomas's argument from order or design seemed to be a good fit, for Colman was God in that classroom, and everything, everything, was well ordered.

There is a picture in Leo Gamble's book of Colman as master in charge of twenty odd members of Loreto house at the 1938 athletic carnival. He seems to be stretching himself to his full height yet, without the clerical suit and collar, he would be just another student of less than average height. But I can assure you that the little man had a ferocious bark. To be called a "spineless jellyfish" by Colman was a frightening experience.

Having said that, it was a common survival strategy for teachers, with large numbers of students in their class, to control them with a certain amount of fear. And it was common for Old Boys who met their teachers in later years to remark that they had mellowed the old days. Colman, for those who met him in later life, was a gentleman with a warm smile and a genuine readiness to engage with others.

Colman was principal at St Bede's on two occasions. From 1948 to 1952, the Brothers community included legendary individuals like Brothers Felix and Alban. With limited money and inadequate physical resources, Colman set about raising academic standards, and that was a constant theme in his talks with both staff and students. His workload was enormous, as he and Felix shared the teaching of all classes at the senior level.

By the early fifties, a growing number of students was matriculating, and fewer students were moving to De La. Ironically, Colman himself spent some years there as a classroom teacher before being reappointed as principal at St Bede's. He probably returned more because of his vow of obedience, than as an act of free will, but he was to remain as principal from 1959 to 1964.

His new challenges included replacing the very popular Brother Finian; rapidly growing student numbers; the need for more and improved facilities and a burdensome existing debt. He was also compelled to employ the first lay staff, who were significantly more expensive than religious Brothers with their vow of poverty. It required a great deal of faith, determination and leadership, before the days of government grants, to appeal to parents for £100,000 to build a new senior block. It was a very fortunate coincidence that the Menzies government decided, at that very time, to assist Catholic schools with science room grants, which added a most welcome £20,000 to the building fund.

Colman left St Bede's a stronger institution in many ways for his having been there. But beyond that, he was a very committed religious Brother, with a strong spirit of faith and a particular devotion to the Virgin Mary.

He moved on to become a popular director of the student Brothers community at Kensington, NSW. That was followed by a period as provincial of the Brothers which would run from 1966 to 1974, when he was succeeded by Brother Quentin. Further appointments were to the community of the Catholic College of Education, which would later become the ACU and, in 1982-3 he was secretary to the bishop of Kundiawa in Papua New Guinea.

Colman died while on holiday with his brother, Brother Amedy, in New Zealand in 1986. He was aged 70.

Colman was a sturdy pioneer. He was at St Bede's working day and night to get the College ready for its opening. He shared the communal sorrow on the drowning death of Leo Boswell. He watched some of his first Old Boys go off to war. He was woken one night as the original chapel burned down. He was a major player in the building of the plant and of the community which is St Bede's College.

It is right and fitting that Brother Colman Molloy should be added to the St Bede's College Roll of Honour.

Mr David Bristow

David Bristow came to St Bede's from St Joseph's, Chelsea, in 1961. His first priority was sport at which he excelled. He was playing under 16 cricket at Bonbeach when he was just 11, and was spotted by Brother Josephus who recommended to David's dad that he should send the lad to St Bede's.

David went on to become a key member of St Bede's teams on Wednesdays in the ACC and on Saturdays in Federal District First Turf. He was also a star ruckman in that junior football team, coached by John Rhoden, which won about 50 games on the trot over three years. You will notice that ruckman have grown a little since the 1960s, even in the U14s!

But excellence in sport did not translate to excellence in the classroom until David was forced to repeat Year 10. He responded so positively to that setback that he was dux of the class the next year. Nevertheless, having no desire to go to university, David left school at the end of Year 11 and started work with the Department of Agriculture. There, he was quickly persuaded to give up a promising cricket career at Richmond and to begin part time study. In the end, this non-student collected a Business Diploma, a Bachelor of Business and a Master of Business Administration.

Following eighteen years in the Victorian Public Service, David took up a position with a Management Consulting Business that later became Ernst and Young. This led to assignments throughout the world with major companies such as BHP Billiton, Ford, BP and Australia Post.

In 2003, David retired from Ernst and Young to set up his own consulting business. In doing so, he determined to use his new found freedom to divide his time between business, improving his golf handicap, and some charitable work. The latter included work on a Sisters of Mercy project for the disadvantaged, and chairmanship of L'Arche Melbourne, a charity which cares for people with an intellectual disability.

Closer to home, David became involved with the St Bede's Old Collegians in the early 2000s when Brother Finian and Trish McCormack were trying to reinvigorate the Association. When Brother Finian stepped down as president, David took over and the Association flourished under his leadership. Initiatives which came to fruition include the following:

- The establishment of the Finian Foundation to provide funding for disadvantaged families who could not otherwise afford to send their sons to the College.
- The encouragement of former students to reconnect with one another through the annual golf day, an annual dinner, and regular reunions.
- The recognition of outstanding achievements of past students through the establishment of the Hall of Fame.
- Recognition of outstanding contributions of individuals to the life of the College through the establishment of a Roll of Honour.

- Assistance to the College in establishing a Careers Insight Evening in which hundreds of past students have participated to inform and to mentor current students.

In all of this work David, and indeed the whole Old Boys Association, worked closely with the College in the implementation of these programmes.

David is royalty in the Old Collegians Association, a claim which is reinforced by the fact that he has a granddaughter called Charlotte.

It is right and fitting that Mr David Bristow should be added to the St Bede's College Roll of Honour.

Mr Tom Perfect

There is a Gospel story with which you are all familiar. It's a lovely story about a lame young man, carried on a litter to Jesus, but the crowd was so great that they had to lower the lame man through the roof. Young men can be very caring of one another. That Gospel story has a parallel in an incident which occurred at Kerang High School in 1972. A certain Mr Perfect, who was laid low by a disease which is best described as self-inflicted, was fast asleep on a couch in a house somewhere, on a Monday morning. His fellow teachers, did not wish to see Tom break the rule, written in stone, that self-inflicted illnesses were no excuse for absence on Monday morning. So they carried Tom and the couch to school, and placed their unconscious load at the main entrance. Miraculously, Tom gradually came to his senses, woken by a constant youthful refrain of

“Good morning, Mr Perfect!”

St Bede's students first said good morning to Mr Perfect in 1973 and kept doing so until 2004. Actually, it was more often 'Tom' than it was 'Mr Perfect', for Tom was not one for keeping a distance between himself and his pupils. Indeed, Tom probably has as many genuine friends among his past students as has any other teacher who has worked there.

A former student of St John's Dandenong, Tom held the principal, Brother Amedy Molloy, Brother Colman's blood brother, in high regard. So Tom left Kerang and came to St Bede's with some sense of what a LaSallian school is all about.

Through the years, he taught English, History, Social Science, Religious Education, Drama and Politics. At different times, he was a caring director of Special Education, head of the Social Science faculty, Curriculum Coordinator and Assistant to the Principal for the LaSallian mission of the school.

In the extra-curricular sphere, Tom coached a number of sporting teams and, in particular, was a successful coach of the First XI. With his lovely wife Judy, who was also a valued member of the St Bede's staff for a number of years, Tom produced several plays. This was in an era which predated the era of full time drama departments, and required hours of out of school dedication, plus the gift of inspiring students to likewise give up much of their time. Gems like Oh What a Lovely War and The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui contributed enormously to many students' experience of school life.

But Tom was also a prime contributor to bonding among the staff. One of his first essays in this regard, in 1975, was to organise a few days at Rutherglen to try the wine. The attendees were the Rhodens, (with one child) the Wintles (childless at the time) the Drummonds (with one child) and the childless Perfects. It was during that trip that Tom expressed his concern that his stay at St Bede's might be short lived. He was teaching year 12 politics with Larry McEvoy at the time, and a new political concept had arisen. It was the single issue pressure group. The prime example of this were those pressing for a homosexual law reform bill. Tom and Macca had raised the issue often enough for a student to complete a suggestive sketch of them on the lecture theatre blackboard. The offending

item was reported to the powers that be. For whatever reason, it was Tom who was on the skids. Not the artist. And not Macca.

Needless to say, we co-workers and colleagues listened to Tom's plight with sympathy, and suggested another glass of Rutherglen Red might help! The following year, with the homosexual question settled, the four original attendees at Rutherglen brought six children to the wine country instead of two, and, within a few years, Tom was able to book out a motel for a widening circle of staff and children.

Tom was a member of Melbourne Chorale for many years, and the flow on to staff small choirs at St Bede's, which Tom directed, was uplifting. Staff members were often left amazed at the quality of music created at various functions, masses and even morning briefings.

Since retiring from St Bede's, Tom has completed a Master of Arts degree. He has also taught short term in a number of schools and has become a tutor to a number of students, all of which has been necessary to finance his thirst for travel. And now, seeking the Good Life, he and Jude have bought a house on half an acre near Daylesford where they can till the soil together, with many happy memories of St Bede's.

It is right and fitting that Tom Perfect should be added to the St Bede's College Roll of Honour.

Peter (Wally) Wintle

Long term staff at St Bede's will always associate Pub Yarns with Larry McEvoy. In December of 1973, in between leaping the bar of the Moorabbin Hotel to pacify a number of enraged pugilists, and helping the local gendarmes to arrest receivers of stolen goods, Macca took the time to have a few words with an unfrocked priest, who was examining the bottom of beer glasses, in search of a plan to recalibrate his life.

The conversation soon became an interview: Can you coach cricket? What about footy? You wouldn't mind taking a few classes in between, would you? Not sure what subjects you'd like to teach? We'll sort that out as we go. Still saying your prayers? I'll have a word to Brother Peter for you. When the Holy Spirit prompted Peter Wintle to follow his nose down to the Moorabbin pub that day, the meeting of two legends led to many benefits for St Bede's.

Wal arrived at St Bede's in 1974, along with his fellow Hooley Pop, Paul Swannie, and they were soon honorary sub-dean and dean of Consumer Education in the middle school. But still higher honours beckoned over the years!

It wasn't long before Wal was Year 10 co-ordinator, teaching English, RE and Con Ed with an easy authority, very much in keeping with the LaSallian concept of what it is to be a brother to his students. He coached cricket, football and even hockey, with enthusiasm, seeming to take in his stride the demands on his time made by trips to faraway places like Chadstone, Malvern, Braybrook. In fact he decided to go even further with regular trips to South Australia, and another to England which included a quick trip to Hadrian's Wall. (Isn't it amazing how desperate teenagers are for culture and history!)

Wal had settled into a Year 10 comfort zone when a higher power decreed that the year level structure at the college would be converted, at years 10–12, into a house/tutorial system. The great man was chosen to be one of the elite senior house masters, the others being Malcolm McDonald, Vin Underwood and Leo Gamble. Though Wal's initial enthusiasm for the restructure knew some bounds, it wasn't long before he had Solomon House buzzing, students and Solomon tutors alike. The Party House, as Solomon was soon called, revelled in eccentric pre-school activities, prided itself on the number of bums on seats at any form of inter house competition, and peaked in the caringly pastoral Year 12 RE programme, where Wally and his sidekick, John Rhoden, were creative innovators in helping young men wrestle with the challenges of growing to manhood.

It could be said that the high point of Wal's coaching career was victory in the Australian Schools Cricket Championships in 1998. But truly, every day seemed to be a highlight for him. Sure, the co-ordinator's role threw up pastoral problems, and paperwork, that could make him grumpy now and then, but there was always an air of optimism and friendliness about him, whether chatting with staff in the lunch room; proclaiming Shakespeare to his English classes; pinning still more photos of sporting teams and Solomon House leaders to his office walls; or when collared by students in the playground.

There must have been a strong St Bede's atmosphere at Wintle evening meals over the years, for Margaret-Mary was a marvellous Year 7 teacher over many years, and three Wintle boys went through the school, with one of them also eventually joining the staff.

Wherever you are now, Macca, your talent spotting wrought great rewards for the College!

It is right and fitting that Peter (Wally) Wintle should be added to the St Bede's College Roll of Honour.

Br Kenneth Ormerod

I have to tell you of the Ormerod Incident. It was a source of embarrassment to many people.

Surfing the internet can lead to some startling discoveries. While preparing for this evening, I discovered Victoria Mitchell, an English columnist, playwright, and the first woman to win a poker competition on the European tour. It didn't take long for me to make the connection between Victoria and Brother Ken. You see, neither of them was shy of calling freeloaders for what they were. In Ken's case, he called Haileybury College for poaching talented students from surrounding schools. His stirring denunciation of Haileybury's rustling of prime cattle was quoted in a number of newspapers, and even debated in federal parliament. It touched seriously upon the vexed issue of schools funding. In the Mitchell case, Victoria was attempting to find and shame a group of people who had adopted the habit of attending society funerals, and enjoying the refreshments supplied at the wake. To achieve her purpose, Victoria publicised the details of the funeral arrangements of a fictitious, distinguished Englishman.

The name of the person whom she decided to send off was Sir William Ormerod.

Br Ken completed his training in a more enlightened age than did Brother Colman. Ken completed his Bachelor of Arts at Macquarie University before teaching at Malvern, Oakhill, Bankstown and Cronulla. For six months in 1990, he was acting principal at St Michael's Henley Beach, SA, where he claims to have practised the smiling and waving skills which are indispensable tools for principals in dealing with staff.

Three years of study, and an M.A. in Theology from La Salle University, Philadelphia led to two years of involvement in the Lasallian education of adults and lay staff in the Brothers' schools.

Ken arrived at St Bede's in 1996, where he was a classroom teacher and director of the Brothers' community. When Brother Quentin went off to pick up papers in the playgrounds at De La Salle, Ken stepped into the role as principal.

In keeping with his studies at La Salle University, Ken was concerned to prepare St Bede's for a changing of the guard. For several decades of St Bede's existence, it was widely assumed that there would be a constant supply of Brothers to teach in and to run the school. It was also widely recognised that the Brothers, from Benignus, through Colman, Finian, their successors and all the Brothers who taught in the college, played an enormous part in forming and nurturing a strong sense of community within the establishment. One of Brother Ken's first initiatives was to appoint an Assistant Principal for Mission and Vision in the school. It was part of a wider plan to prepare the school, and indeed, all of the Brothers schools, for a time when there would be fewer and fewer Brothers, in Australia at least.

While applauding Brother Ken for his efforts in passing on the torch, I think we must acknowledge the fortitude of those Brothers who still carry on. There are fewer of them, and Ken is below average age for the Brothers of the Australasian District. Yet I see no

reason to doubt that three hundred years of LaSallian tradition will, like a one hundred year old Anzac tradition, live on in one form or another. Indeed, Ken is quietly pleased to list a substantial number of St Bede's staff members who, in recent years, have gone on to positions of leadership at other schools, or to strengthen the ranks of teaching staff at St James, St John's Dandenong, and De La Salle.

On the other hand, he boasts of none who moved on to Haileybury!

While at St Bede's, Ken gave special attention to the education of students with special needs, as well as supporting the extension of technology as an educational tool. He has always enjoyed refereeing and coaching basketball. A highlight of his involvement in that sport, was to coach St Bede's to victory in the State Basketball Championships, and to fourth place in the National Championships.

Not bad for a school with no basketball scholarships!

After leaving St Bede's, Brother Ken was principal at Oakhill College from 2007 to 2012, from which position he retired after a confrontation with cancer and the loss of one kidney. He is now engaged in formation and vocation work for the Brothers in various regions of the world.

It is right and fitting that Brother Ken Ormerod should be added to the St Bede's College Roll of Honour.