



SBOCA Roll of Honour inductees 2018

Br Josephus Garrity

When Gough Whitlam came to power in 1972, and, by the strength of his personality, succeeded in raising Australia's stature in the world and changing the way that Australians regarded themselves, I was reminded of the similar effect that Br Josephus Garrity had on the development of St Bede's two decades earlier. There have been many adjectives, not all of them complimentary, used to describe Gough. Most of these could also be applied to Josephus. Both men were tall, imposing, flamboyant, charming, temperamental, and even petulant when they didn't get their own way, but the adjective that fits them best is charismatic. I had never heard the word charisma when Joey arrived at St Bede's in 1953, but looking back I can see that he was its embodiment.

His teaching style was spectacularly different from anything I had encountered before. In his Intermediate (Year 10) Maths class, the air was rich with mnemonics. "All Stations To Cheltenham", he would roar when explaining trigonometric ratios to us. (If trig ratios don't play a big part in your life, I wouldn't waste time trying to work out the significance of that slogan, but it was very helpful to us at the time.) And it wasn't just mnemonics. I remember trying to determine the maths involved in the cry "All My Boys Eat John Bull Oats", only to find it was a radio ad featuring the eccentric Percy Cerutti, Herb Elliott's Athletics coach. Then there were the slabs of Gilbert and Sullivan which he would recite apropos of nothing. With a larger than life teacher like this, Maths was never dull.

In 1953, the total enrolment from Grade 3 to Year 12 was fewer than 400 and there were only 12 students in Matriculation (Year 12). We were the minnows of the Associated Catholic Colleges, and, if you'll excuse the mixed metaphors, the chopping block in every sport we participated in. Josephus was appointed coach of the 1st 18 and immediately set out to rectify this situation. He called a meeting of leaders and asked what the problem was. "Size, Brother", was the answer. "There aren't enough of us." "We'll go down to Year 10 to get players if we have to" was his reply. And he did just that. There were 7 Year 10s in the team that, through hard work and inspirational coaching, recorded our first victories against the powerhouses De La Salle, St Kilda and Parade. For the last game against St Kevin's at Parkdale Oval, the whole school was in attendance. There were wild scenes when we won easily and claimed the Premiership undefeated. Issues of low self-esteem were now behind us.

Never one to rest on his laurels, Josephus now turned his attention to musical theatre. He decided on a production of "Annie Get Your Gun". The bulk of the cast came from the footy team, but because of the absence of girls, our collaboration with Kilbreda still years in the future, he had to go down to Proficiency (Year 9) to find a talented, good looking boy soprano who could play the role of Annie Oakley. The choice was Kevin Egan, who in later life became the formidable Superintendent Kevin Egan of Victoria Police. (Kevin is here with us tonight). Most of the prospective actors had never seen a musical, much less participated in one, so he took the team to see "Call Me Madam" at the Princess Theatre. After the show, we were all taken backstage to meet the leading lady, Evie Hayes, who told us she was sure "Annie" would be a great success. How Joey managed this I don't know. It was the first of several encounters with celebrities that he was able to organise. After a tempestuous few months, during which the plug was nearly pulled on the whole operation, "Annie" played to rave reviews. Toni and I were lucky enough to see a performance of "Annie" on Broadway in 2000. I immediately sent Josephus an email saying that while it was good, it wasn't a patch on the 1953 performance in the Mentone Town Hall. Joey's interest in theatre continued all his life. In an interview, John Doyle, the Roy Slaven half of Roy and HG, was asked how he got into the business of writing and performing. He answered that it all began when a new Principal, Br Josephus Garrity, arrived at his school at Lithgow. He encouraged him to write and present plays, and this became his life's work.

In October of 1953, with the approval of the Principal, Br Finian, Josephus entered two teams in the local Saturday cricket competition. Each team consisted of 2 or 3 adults and 8 or 9 kids. Leo Gamble, at that time a fresh faced university student, was one of the adults. As usual, Josephus led from the front. His batting style was reminiscent of Keith Miller. I can still see the sixes ricocheting off the walls of the Mentone Pub and hear the cheers of the patrons on the balcony. It was the grounding that we received playing against men that paved the way for our first ACC cricket premiership in 1958. Again, celebrities played a role in that. I still have a handwritten analysis of my bowling action written by Lindsay Hassett. Somehow, Joey had persuaded him to attend several practices and write comments on a number of our players. It is interesting to note that this cricket club started by Josephus has evolved by a number of amalgamations into the current District Cricket club Kingston Hawks.

In the ensuing years, Josephus turned his attention to Athletics with his usual enthusiasm. Notices used to go up in March exhorting long distance runners to "get those miles into your legs", even though the Athletics Carnival wasn't until October. Long jump and high jump facilities were carved out of scrub and there was even talk of a cinder track. In 1954, Englishman Roger Bannister, who died recently, became the first man to break the 4 minute mile barrier. He was coached by Franz Stampfl who pioneered a revolutionary method known as interval training. Joey was always first with the latest so it was no surprise to see him using interval training on the front oval. What was surprising was that these sessions were being supervised by Stampfl himself. He had migrated to Australia in 1955 to take up a position at Melbourne University and had been persuaded by Josephus to come to St Bede's. Inevitably, our first ACC Athletics title came in 1958.

By the time Josephus left the College at the end of 1963, it was a vastly different place.

In 2001 a function was held here to mark the 50th anniversary of that first footy premiership. Yes, it should have been 2003, but organiser Tony O'Brien panicked that people might die if

we waited another two years so it was held in 2001. At that gathering, Josephus played down his achievements, stating that sports now played only a small part in his life, and that his enduring passion was for gardening. Come to think of it, on top of everything else, he had started boarders' vegetable gardens in the 1950s.

The sports complex that sits on what was once the Back Oval was for a time called the Br Josephus Garrity building. The sign bearing his name disappeared during extensions and was never replaced. I trust that it will reappear soon.

Br Josephus died in 2013 at the age of 87 after a rich and full life. Because we have so far been unable to locate any of his relatives, there will be no response to this citation. I believe I am being given his trophy for safe-keeping while the search for relatives continues. I have always felt uncomfortable being on the Roll of Honour when Br Josephus was not.

Thankfully, that has now been put to rights. **We are pleased to acknowledge Br Josephus Garrity as a member of the St Bede's College Roll of Honour.**

Paul Diggerson

Paul Diggerson is both a fine St. Bede's Old Collegian and was an absolute stalwart on the Committee of The St. Bede's Old Collegians Association for 15 years, from 2000 to 2015, and was a diligent Treasurer of the old collegians and Finian Foundation for nearly all this period.

Paul was a member of the St. Bede's Class of 1971. While he did well at school academically winning subject prizes in multiple years, he was probably better known for his athletic feats with wins in the u15 880 yards and u17 1,500 metres at the Associated Catholic Colleges Athletic Carnival – both in record time.

He then studied Accounting and Business at Caulfield Institute of Technology before embarking on Stage 1 of his professional career at Newscorp, with some exposure to the skills and traits of one Rupert Murdoch. He might share some memories with us.

Then it was time to set up his own accounting and business advisory practice, SPM Business Consultants. Paul's choice of hair style made him fit the Certified Practising Accountants motto of the day "Not Your Average Accountant". It worked then for Paul and he hasn't seen the need to change hair style since. Who would pick this astute hippy-like gent as a brilliant accountant and business advisor? The St. Bede's Old Collegians Association was very delighted he was that brilliant accountant and business advisor.

Paul's first year of involvement with the Old Collegians was in 2000, when Br. Finnian, Trish McCormack (here tonight) and Alan Backman (here tonight) decided to give the Old Collegians a re-birth, following the huge 60th anniversary reunion at Caulfield Racecourse in 1998, an amazingly well organised and well-attended event with Trish McCormack in the pilot's seat.

Paul was with this same group of people, plus current Roll-of-Honour member David Bristow, when the Finian Foundation was established in 2004, raising funds to assist economically challenged families send their boys to St. Bede's College.

Paul went well beyond his Treasurer's responsibility and was 'minister for reunions' from 2001 to 2011 and was instrumental in instigating a systematic approach to reunions every 10 years. These reunions kept the heart of the Old Collegians beating for a long time.

As Treasurer of both the Old Collegians Association and The Finian Foundation, Paul was diligent, detailed minded, adhering to all necessary governance and was also instrumental in stealing good ideas from other alumni associations, with his award going to Haileybury College as having ideas and practices always worth borrowing. He was a good 'spy' and great contributor of ideas to the association. His humour was the icing on the cake.

Sticking around for 15 years wasn't in Paul's plans. His first attempted resignation in 2012 was met with a "you're too valuable to resign" from then President Steven Ager. Paul's response..... "I'll have to die to get out of this job".

But Paul had paid his dues and by 2015 it was time to move on after a truly magnificent contribution from a person with so much to give.

Paul continues to head up his business consulting firm, still is "not your average accountant", saves money on haircuts to boost his super fund and has recently been appointed as an official with Rowing Australia, just proving that he is still willing to give.

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Paul Swannie

The exact moment at which God called Paul Swannie to the vocation of plumber is not recorded, but he once exhibited his natural talents for it in the playground at CBC St Kilda. The bubblers were controlled by taps which allowed a constant flow, though when all were running, the tap at one end received more pressure than the tap at the other. The challenge was to balance the flow so as to get half a dozen condoms standing upright at the one time, one affixed to each tap. A growing crowd, which included the Brother Headmaster, was entranced to watch young Paul's natural talent achieve the desired result. Well! Perhaps the headmaster was less intrigued than the others.

Paul went on to perfect his plumbing skills before turning his mind to becoming a teacher. He was brought to St Bede's by that master recruiter, Brother Peter, and began his career, in Years 9 and 10, with another refugee from an earlier vocation in yours truly (Peter Wintle). Together Paul, as dean, and myself, as sub-dean, formed the Consumer Education faculty which purported to teach young men life skills via the textbook "The Business of Living".

In 1975 Brother Bill and Paul put their heads together and came up with the idea of the Technical Stream in Year Eleven, which was a concept well ahead of its time, and which proved the test of time, running until replaced by VCAL some three decades later. The facilities were initially primitive, with Paul working out of the garage of the Parsons house and the red brick house behind it, but the very existence of the Tech Stream, gave impetus to the building of the excellent facilities in the Creative Arts Block.

The Tech Stream was designed for the less academically inclined student, but it required an enormous amount of background work to make it a success. Paul assembled a large network of employers, in all kinds of trades and businesses, to be used for work experience and possible placement at the end of Year Eleven, or even before. His success rate in placing his family of non-academics was extraordinarily high, and the relationships he forged with those young men have been lasting. His remarkable success in recruiting prospective employers, and the public relations involved in doing it, should also be acknowledged.

Paul put the round ball game on the map at St Bede's, coaching our first ever soccer championship team in 1987. By his own words, he acknowledges that his success was built more on his selection policies, than on his strategies. His constant refrain was that he always preferred boys bred for the game, whose surnames ended with a vowel. Perhaps his greatest soccer highlight though, was when he was able to attend an FA Cup final.

Paul was a member, or leader, of many a team of teachers and students to go on school camps, all over Australia, both with the Tech Stream and with mainstream students. These trips are the source of hundreds of stories, which he tells so well, whenever two or three past teachers gather together. One of them, which I have not heard him tell, is of the former St Bede's teacher (Who may be here tonight, ie Tony Vaughn) who slept the night in the luggage boot of a Hoy's bus and did not wake in time to remove himself before the bus drove off, at Paul's direction, to the morning's destination. Licola, Hattah Lakes, Phillip Island and other venues will forever be remembered by many of our students.

Paul spent many a weekend at Phillip Island with members of the maintenance staff, rather than students, for he played a huge part in the design and construction of the facility which is

so well used by the College. There are dozens of smaller jobs, too many to list, which he did in non-school time to help keep the college running.

Involvement in the St Bede's community seems often to become a family affair, so we should also note tonight, the excellent contribution made to the college By Paul's wife Joan, who has long played a pivotal role in the supervision of public exams at St Bede's.

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Trish McCormick

Trish always was, and still is, a work of art in progress. In the cut and colour of her hair, as in the cut and colour of her cloth, she presents herself with unique flair and is thus a stunning billboard for the arts that she loves so much.

She was an excellent art teacher and faculty co-ordinator, with an eye to every opportunity for students to think creatively and to display their skills. Examples of this are the murals on various buildings on the railway line, behind Mentone shopping centre, on the Nepean Highway, and at St John Vianney's Church, still **as far as I know!** surviving and respected by graffiti artists.

She put enormous energy into organising an annual Art Show, as well as College fashion parades, and the week-long Festival of the Arts, which commenced during the 1990s. That week showcased our own local talent in drama, art, music and student bands, as well as importing visiting groups such as trainee members of the Australian Ballet Company.

The year 1998 was a special one for the College, for it was the year of the Diamond Jubilee. Brother Quentin turned to Trish to organise some of the central events held that year. She co-ordinated a memorable dinner for some six hundred former students at Caulfield Racecourse, as well as a Cocktail evening for parents. It fell to her as well to design, purchase and sell memorabilia associated with the celebrations. Quentin had no doubts about her worth, for she spent many years on his College Leadership team, renowned for speaking her mind in meetings and for her loyal front in public.

As if her school work were not enough, by then she had become Brother Finian's right hand woman on the Old Collegians Committee, playing a vital part in rejuvenating the association, and earning Finian's eternal respect and gratitude for doing so. As we are all aware, Old Collegians were seen by the great man as a central part of his mission in later life.

Trish committed herself to support and assist the committee which included men like Stephen Agar, David Bristow and tonight's inductee, Paul Diggerson. In this role, she was full of ideas and used her enthusiastic personality to get others involved with them. Always looking for new ways of communicating with people, Trish was a key player in editing and publishing early editions of the Beda Boys Bulletin. She organised the original Hall of Fame Dinner, held in 2008 at the Brighton International. It was a glittering affair in which no less than twenty former Old Collegians were acknowledged, and it was a significant step in revitalising the organisation – a real shot in the arm.

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Chris Comas

It is said that when Chris was courting his lovely wife May, she suggested a walk in the rain. He said "No!" "Why not?" she asked. To which he replied: "It's ... too wet to woo!"

I suppose it's a pattern in a number of professions, that you show skill and expertise in one area, and the powers that be take you out of that situation and kick you upstairs. Chris did some wonderful things outside the classroom while at St Bede's, but the quality of his classroom work should be acknowledged before anything else.

He was an old school teacher, in charge of a class in which all of the students soon learned the behaviours and the routines that helped the day to run efficiently. He was always thoroughly organised and permanently cheerful, having the best interest of his students always in the forefront of his mind. Science and maths were his forte, and in the latter, he was particularly skilled in opening up to his students the mysteries of OWL-gebra! In the first instance, it was Chris's qualities as a teacher which led many younger recruits to look up to him.

It was, therefore, inevitable that he should be offered the role of year level co-ordinator, which he performed efficiently and with good grace for a number of years. It is interesting to reflect on the pioneering role of men like Chris who helped to transition the administrative structure of the College from one in which there was a principal, In a Cuffley, and an assortment of classroom teachers who did as they wished in their own principalities.

Power never went to his head. In fact, Chris was always one to exercise influence rather than power, bringing his staff along with him. Always calm and measured, his staff had confidence in him and never saw him as someone lording it over them.

He played a central role in promoting Grampians trips which have been a highlight of the year for hundreds of young men over the last forty years and, like most staff members at St Bede's over the years, he gave himself willingly to camps and excursions which took him away from home for extended periods.

But perhaps the activity with which his name will always be associated is the mid-week, internal, basketball competition, and what a marvellous competition it proved to be, and not only for the basic physical endeavour which it required of the players. It involved platoons of students and parents as captains, coaches and referees. Teams, graded as far as possible into levels of ability, chose their own exotic names. The draw, ladders, top scorers, MVPs were all meticulously tabulated, and pored over by eager young eyes. Mid-week basketball became the perfect example of public relations, attracting who knows how many parents and students to the school.

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Br Michael McCabe

In truth, we are both pleased and fortunate to have Brother Michael with us tonight. Some years ago, the situation looked grim indeed as Brother was laid up with a mysterious illness. He was cheerful enough when the Brothers visited him, and was able to explain:

“I’ve got stones in my uterus.”

“Do you mean your urethrea?”

“Yes! That’s it. They’re going to give me an IVF.”

“I think that’s an MRI.”

“Could be. I’ll have an autopsy tomorrow, and if it’s OK, I can go home.”

Brother Michael is proud of his Struggletown origins, and of having attended St Ignatius Primary School in Richmond, the alma mater of Jack Dyer, Kevin Sheedy and Van Tuong Nguyen, who was executed for drug trafficking in Thailand in 2005. As it happened, Michael spurned the options of Australian Rules football and drug trafficking, and joined the De La Salle Brothers instead in 1961.

Brother Michael’s two major contributions to the College were as Junior School Principal and as Boarding Master, and he acquitted himself well in both roles. The place and the contribution of the boarding school to the life of the College is gradually being forgotten, and more’s the pity. The young men who, from the day the school was opened, came from country Victoria, interstate, and even overseas, were largely responsible for the development of a genuine St Bede’s spirit. Brother Michael was in charge of the boarding school when the number of boarders was at its peak, and he was called upon to play a variety of roles in bringing it all together and developing, as far as possible, a family spirit among the boys. He was a great success in the role. Waking boys who were dead to the world in the early hours; supervising meals and night study; granting permissions to leave the premises and grounding any who might have misbehaved; keeping in touch with parents; having a friendly word with the likes of the kitchen staff; and rounding the boys up for night prayer.

Perhaps Brother Michael’s greatest strength was his friendliness and his openness to the people he was dealing with. To parents of boarders and day students alike, he was one of the most recognisable faces on the staff of the College, as he was always ready to mingle at any school functions or to greet people watching sporting events on the front oval.

Michael knew where his boys came from, and made it his business to visit the family homes of boarders whenever he could. He even went to Nauru on one occasion, for we drew a sizeable contingent from that island for some time. He was held in such regard there that the red carpet was laid out for him from the aeroplane, as in a state visit. Michael has a way of accepting such tributes as a matter of course, so he swanned down the carpet, waving to bystanders and shaking hands with dignitaries, before tucking in to the lavish dinner put on in his honour.

Brother’s contribution to the Old Collegians Association was also a significant one, for he was an enthusiastic contributor at meetings and other gatherings while he remained at the College

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