

**Speech by the Head of St Mark's College, Professor Don Markwell,
at the unveiling of Tsering Hannaford's portrait of
Ian Wall AM and Pamela Wall OAM
St Mark's College, Sunday 5 December 2021**

Ian Wall AM and Pamela Wall OAM, artist Tsering Hannaford and her mother Shirley Andris, Premier the Hon. Steven Marshall MP, the Hon. Hieu Van Le AC and Mrs Lan Le, Minister the Hon. Josh Teague MP, Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Høj AC and Professor Mandy Thomas, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Jennie Shaw, St Mark's Board chair Ms Linda Matthews and Mr Ray Matcham, other Board members, Honorary Fellows, distinguished guests, Old Collegians and friends of the College, students and staff of St Mark's – friends all!

What a delight it is to welcome you to this unveiling of Tsering Hannaford's superb portrait of our dear friends, Ian and Pamela Wall!

It would be hard to imagine assembling such distinguished company at such short notice here at St Mark's other than to honour and to say heartfelt thanks to Ian and Pammie Wall. Thank you so much for coming.

This morning, I will say something about Ian and Pammie and their profound connection to St Mark's, and about the artist Tsering Hannaford, before Ian and Pammie will say a few words and unveil the portrait, and then I will call on Tsering Hannaford to speak about the painting of the portrait – before we enjoy a celebratory morning tea outside around the Pond.

In the history of this College, no one has been more generous to St Mark's, nor made a greater contribution to facilities and support for our students, than Ian and Pamela Wall.

Theirs is a uniquely special place in the current life and in the history of this College, just as theirs is a very special place in the South Australian community, to which they have contributed so much, both through the development of a remarkable and innovative international business based in Adelaide, and through their extraordinary and unassuming generosity to so many good causes.

In 2007, Pammie was recognised in the Order of Australia for – I quote – “service to the community through a range of disability support, veterans' welfare and charitable organisations”.

In 2008, Ian was honoured for “service to business, particularly through the design and manufacture of electronic communication equipment, and to the community through philanthropic activities”. In 2019, he was further honoured “for significant service to the community through philanthropic initiatives”.

These awards arose in part from Ian and Pammie's remarkable generosity to this College, for which, of course, we are deeply grateful.

This portrait by Tsering Hannaford is one way in which we at St Mark's say “thank you”. The portrait will hang in a place of honour on the wall behind the High Table, next to Gavin

Walkley and near former Masters Rose Alwyn and John Bannon. Those portraits are all by Robert Hannaford, now to be joined here in “Hannaford corner” by this portrait by Tsering Hannaford.

When you get a chance to see the portrait, you might notice – amongst other details which Tsering has captured so skilfully – that Ian is proudly wearing his St Mark’s College tie, as he is today.

In his speech on his election as an Honorary Fellow of St Mark’s in 2008, Ian described himself as the “only child of parents of modest means [his father was a Master Butcher in suburban Adelaide] who wanted the best opportunity in life for their son”. Growing up, Ian had always been - as he once put it – “interested in how things worked, electrical things, about dismantling them and putting them together again”. And so by the age of 13 or 14, he was set on becoming an engineer.

Ian was a student at Pulteney Grammar, did intermediate physics and chemistry at the School of Mines and Industries, and then completed his secondary education at St Peter’s College. His application form for entry to St Mark’s in 1950 says that he participated at Saints in the Science Society, of which he was Secretary in 1949, and in the Automative Society. You might soon begin to recognise some recurring themes.

Ian came into residence as an undergraduate student at St Mark’s in 1950, and as he later said, “my life was really centred around St Mark’s for [nearly] five years”.

As members of this College know, the College’s annual magazine recording College life is known as *The Lion*. A somewhat flowery editorial note in *The Lion* of Ian’s first year described *The Lion* as enabling Collegians – and I quote – “to watch ourselves in retrospect, a company of young men marching slowly to meet the life that lies ahead”. Certainly the references to Ian in *The Lion* each year enable us to see him as a young man moving – quite rapidly, I think – to *make* the life that lay ahead.

In each of the years that Ian was a resident student at St Mark’s, *The Lion* records aspects of his life here – his progress through his degree in Electrical Engineering at the University of Adelaide, including his being recommended for the Electricity Trust Prize in 1954; his participation in the University Squadron; his service for three consecutive years on the College Club Committee, including in 1954 as Treasurer; his role in the student escapade in the Adelaide Hills known as Alpine Day, including in one year his making “a lightning detour home” to collect “a large quantity of chops and steaks” to rescue the Alpiners from the grim prospect of spaghetti and saveloys; his being thanked for “handling ... the backstage and technical arrangements” for the College Revue; and there is more.

Along the way, Ian had become a well-regarded College identity with the affectionate nickname “Prof”. In many of the references to him in *The Lion*, he is simply referred to as “Prof”¹.

The Lion both in 1951 and 1952 had a column called “Table Talk” which purported to record conversations over a College meal. In the 1952 Table Talk spoof conversation, “Proff Wall” declares what he calls “some strictly high-frequency stuff”. He says: “If its feed-backs,

¹ Sometimes “Proff.”

camshafts, differentials, piston rings, or distributors you're enquiring about, just come to old Proff Wall. Yeah, that's me. With mechanics I'm dynamite..." Never a truer word spoken!

Later in the spoof scene, Proff Wall - quote - "leaps from the dining hall into a high-powered sports car, and within a split second the only trace is a line of recumbent pedestrians reaching to infinity."

In his Report for the 1954 *Lion*, the President of the College Club, Michael Hobbs, expressed thanks to members of the Club Committee, in which Ian was Treasurer, for "the efficient manner in which they performed their various tasks". The Club President wrote: "I would like to pay particular tribute to Prof. Wall, who moved as facilely within the complexities of the treasurership as he does within those of a ten-valve high frequency amplifier..." Is it any surprise that within five years Ian and his co-founders were to create what became Codan, the hugely and globally successful electronics company?

The Club President's Report in *The Lion* of 1954 also recorded – quote: "It was with regret that we received Prof's resignation from the College Club at the end of the second term..." The reason is not hard to find – because the same edition of *The Lion* recorded the happy news of the marriage later in the year of "Prof. Wall" to Pam Hogon. This year Ian and Pammie celebrated their 67th wedding anniversary.

Pammie had been a student at what is now St Peter's Woodlands Grammar School, and when Ian first met her she was working at the National Bank as a Ledger Keeper before starting nursing at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

Ian and Pammie's has been a brilliant partnership. Ian has spoken of Pammie supporting him "in every endeavour" throughout their married life². So much of what they have done, including their philanthropy, has been done together, as a team.

It is for this reason that the College's Library is called the Ian and Pamela Wall Academic Centre. They are *jointly* Governors of the College Foundation. And it is very fitting that this should be a joint portrait of Ian and Pammie – just as Robert Hannaford's very different portrait at Carrick Hill, where Pammie is so involved, is a joint portrait of Ian and her.

In an oral history interview for the College in 2013, Ian spoke of his years in College – how College life developed his social skills, with the learning curve of the only child interacting more than ever before with other young people, and the development of his somewhat extensive social life; the lively discussions with a broad mix of fellow Collegians, including in those days many Western Australian medical students and Colombo Plan students from Asian countries; other student activities; the wise counsel and guidance of the Master, Archie Price, and the Vice-Master, Bob Lewis; the tutorial system, including the tutorial support in mathematics of Dr Mary Harding, Principal of St Ann's; the pastoral care; the interesting guest speakers - what Ian called "the total experience".

Ian said that his years at St Mark's gave him - I quote - "good preparation for the things that I needed to do in my adult life", and that without St Mark's, he would not have had the success that he has had.

² Including serving for 20 years on the Board of Codan.

Ian also said that his parents “had a great belief in the University College concept of education” and so had made it possible for him to attend St Mark’s. Could there be a better vindication of “the University College concept of education”, or of parents creating educational opportunities for their child?

One particularly important conversation for Ian was with his Saint’s and later St Mark’s College friend, Dick Brown, who at St Mark’s was studying mechanical engineering while Ian was studying electrical engineering. As Ian recounts it, one day Dick Brown said to him: "Ian, I think you ought to have a yarn with Alistair Wood".

Ian replied: "Yes, Dick, why would I want to do that?" to which Dick Brown replied: "I think you've got a lot in common".

Perhaps somewhat sceptically, Ian did have a yarn with Alistair Wood, and did find a lot in common. Together they went on to make scientific equipment for the physics, chemistry, and mechanical engineering departments. The friendship formed at that stage led Ian, Alistair, and a third friend, Jim Bettison, together in 1959 to start the company that became Codan. One of Codan’s two principal design engineers in its early decades, Ian retired from its Board in 2009, after 50 years’ service as an innovative engineer and a clear-minded businessman.

It has been authoritatively said that Ian and his co-founder Alistair Wood “demonstrated exceptional engineering skill by personally developing the exceptional high frequency (HF) radio technology and products that were the cornerstone of the success of the Codan business, and which over decades have provided such important assistance to many people worldwide”.

As well as in remote Australia, “Codan’s products are used worldwide by most UN, NGO and other humanitarian and aid agencies, and by government and many private organisations”, and Codan has received a number of awards for export achievement, innovation, and manufacturing.

On his election as a Fellow of the College in 2008, Ian said:

“When I look back, I see that I owe much of my success to my years in residence at St Mark’s and the wise counsel of Archie Price and Bob Lewis just as students in later times have received from the College and the several Masters who followed on.

“I firmly believe that the future of our children, grandchildren and, indeed, society itself will depend on the leadership of well educated citizens. That is why I am a strong supporter of St Mark’s and other institutions of learning.”

Ian has also spoken of his feeling – I quote - “almost a duty that you should reinforce the opportunity for those who are to follow in your steps”.

It is no secret that Ian and Pammie’s support has been indispensable to the completion of the flats in the north-west corner of the College, one block of which is known – in gratitude to both Ian and Pammie - as “Wall”; the East Wing, which includes the gym, the Ian and Pamela Wall Academic Centre, and two levels of excellent student accommodation; and the secure multi-storey car-park, including last year the addition of new levels to the carpark, taking our car parking capacity to a remarkable 160 spaces – a great amenity for our students, providing safe parking off the street.

We could not be more grateful for this, and for Ian and Pammie's support in so many other ways over the years – for the Library, the gym, computer connections, the Gas Truck, the Downer House lift, and scholarships, which are a central focus for the College today – creating and reinforcing opportunity for those who may follow in our steps.

On the wall behind me are portraits of people of outstanding significance in the life of this College to whom we owe much. At the beginning of Ian's first year in the College, Sir Henry Newland – long-term Chair of the College Council – unveiled the portrait by Sir Ivor Hele of the founding Master, Sir Archibald Grenfell Price, marking his first 25 years as Master. In Ian's final year at St Mark's, Sir Ivor Hele's portrait of Sir Henry Newland was unveiled. Since then have come two portraits by Sir William Dargie, and those by Robert Hannaford, and by other significant artists such as Barbara Beasley-Southgate.

Soon Tsering Hannaford's splendid portrait of Ian and Pammie Wall will join them on this wall, where it most fittingly belongs.

Tsering Hannaford is twice a graduate of the University of Adelaide, in psychology and in art history, and has studied painting and specifically portrait painting in Adelaide, New York, and France. Her works have won many awards, and she has been a finalist for the Archibald Prize in the last seven consecutive years, including being highly commended last year.

If you don't already, I think that when you see her portrait of Ian and Pammie you will understand why.

And now it is my great pleasure to call on Ian and Pammie, first to say a few words and then to unveil Tsering Hannaford's portrait of them.