

## **Founders' Day 2021 – Sunday 2 May 2021**

### **Speeches by the Head of St Mark's College, Professor Don Markwell**

#### **Morning tea in honour of the Founders, and Ian and Pamela Wall:**

A very warm welcome to this Founders' Day – the first event to which we have been able to invite alumni and friends of the College in any numbers for well over a year, because of the pandemic.

I am so glad we are able to have today's events, and so glad that so many members and friends of the College are here. Thank you for coming!

I look forward to welcoming you in more detail when we are back in the Hall.

But let us begin with the traditional toast to the Founders, and to propose this toast, I am delighted to call on the Chair of the College Board, Ms Linda Matthews. ...

Today, we also want to toast two people whose remarkably generous support for the College has been truly transformative – Ian and Pamela Wall.

As you may know, Ian was born on 15 May 1931, and so will celebrate his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in 13 days' time.

Ian was a student at St Mark's from 1950 to 1954, while studying Electrical Engineering at the University of Adelaide. Affectionately known by the nickname "Prof", Ian was an eager participant in College life, and was on the College Club Committee from 1952 to 1954, and Club Treasurer in 1954.

Meanwhile, Pammie was training to be a nurse nearby at the Women's and Children's Hospital, later supporting Ian in, amongst much else, the development of the communications technology company Codan, which Ian co-founded in 1959. It has been brilliantly successful.

Ian has said that he owes much of his success in life to his time at St Mark's, and in gratitude for that, he and Pammie have together been extraordinarily supportive of the College and of our students – helping St Mark's to offer current and future generations the best life-changing opportunities we can provide.

Ian and Pammie's support has been indispensable to the completion of the flats in this north-west corner of the College; 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 in the 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, and a great attraction and asset for the College.

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 Gassie, the Downer House lift, and scholarships (which are a central focus for the College today)

Today, we want especially to say “thank you” to Ian and Pammie for the carpark extension, but also to acknowledge with profound gratitude all their support for the College and our students.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the impact of their philanthropy is unparalleled in the history of this College.

The College Board believes that generosity of such scale and impact merits recognition alongside those major figures in the College’s history who are acknowledged with portraits in the Dining Hall. And so I am delighted to announce this morning that the College has commissioned a joint portrait of Ian and Pamela Wall, which will be painted over the next several months by Tsering Hannaford, a significant South Australian painter who is already a six-time Archibald Prize finalist – and who is here this morning.

To express our deep gratitude to Ian and Pamela Wall, most especially for the recently completed carpark extension, would you please join me in raising your glasses and toasting them – to Ian and Pamela Wall.

It’s now my pleasure to invite Ian to say a few words in response. ...

As you know, Ian turns 90 on the 15<sup>th</sup> of this month. We warmly congratulate him on that landmark birthday, and wish him well for many more.

To mark this special occasion, I would like to ask Ian to cut the cake, and our Choir will help to lead us in singing “Happy Birthday”.

Ian, would you please do the honours in cutting the cake?

**Unveiling of portrait of Ms Rose Alwyn, and photographic portraits of the late Georgia Blain, Dr Rachel Buxton, Dr Angela Evans AM, and Ms Linda Matthews:**

On this day on which we honour the Founders of this College, who created St Mark's nearly a century ago, it is fitting that we acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which the College is situated, the Kurna people, and pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land, and we acknowledge that these are of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today.

What a delight it is to welcome you to St Mark's today!

After this unveiling ceremony, I hope that you will stay for a drink in celebration and something further to eat.

It is a particular delight to welcome back my predecessor and friend, our eighth Master, Rose Alwyn, and her son, Nic Conway. Rose's portrait, which we are here to see unveiled, has been painted by Robert Hannaford AM, who apologises that he is unable to be here today as he is recovering from an operation.

We are also here to unveil the photographic portraits of four other St Mark's women of influence – the late Georgia Blain, Dr Rachel Buxton, Dr Angela Evans AM, and Ms Linda Mathews. Along with Rachel, Angela, and Linda, we are delighted to welcome Georgia's husband, Andrew Taylor, and her close friend, Dr Louise Marsh, who – like Georgia Blain and Angela Evans – was one of the first women to enter St Mark's when the College went coeducational in 1982. Next year we mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that landmark in our history, which will give us the opportunity to recognise many others, many here today, who have been important in our journey in coeducation.

Please forgive me if, in welcoming you today, I do not mention by name everyone who merits recognition.

Alongside current and Old Collegians, parents of Collegians, and many friends of the College, I particularly welcome current and former members of the College Board; former members of the College Council, including its Chairman from 1982 to 2000 and our Honorary Fellow, the Hon. Rod Matheson AM QC, and Mrs Léonie Matheson; and a number of other Honorary Fellows.

Among them, of course, we especially honour today Ian Wall AM. As was reflected over morning tea, Ian and Pamela Wall's remarkable generosity has been transformative for this College, and in recognition of this, in coming months a joint portrait of Ian and Pammie will be painted by Tsering Hannaford, whom we are also delighted to have with us today.

Regulars in this Hall will have noticed that the portraits have been rehung, so let me say a word about that. Guided in this by the brilliant Robert Pontifex, who is with us this morning, we have rehung the lower row of portraits behind me as they were before. Perhaps you will recognise them as, from the left, one of our Founders and the Chairman of the College Council from 1926 to 1953, Sir Henry Newland; wife of the founding Master and herself a significant benefactor of the College, Lady Price; the founding Master, Sir Archibald Grenfell

Price; the second Master, Bob Lewis; and the early College Club President, member of the College Council for 40 years and Chairman for over 20, Gavin Walkley.

There are relatives by birth or marriage of every one of these titans of the College here today, and you are most welcome.

Elsewhere in the College there are paintings of three other of our Founders – Canon Julian Bickersteth, Dudley Turner, and Charles Hawker – and it is a pleasure to welcome relatives of Charles Hawker here today.

Some of the other Founders of the College, including the founding Chairman of the Council, Bishop Nutter Thomas, are also represented among the photographs of our Honorary Foundation Fellows and our Honorary Fellows which are now hung – more prominently than before – along the full expanse of the southern wall of this Hall. We are grateful to them all, including to the Honorary Fellows here today.

If the lower row of portraits behind me includes the first and second Masters of the College, the new, top row has the third through to the seventh Masters of the College, and once it is unveiled today, from tomorrow that top row will also include our eighth Master, Rose Alwyn, whose portrait will hang next to that of her predecessor, John Bannon, and beside him, that of his predecessor, Robin Ashwin.

It is a particular pleasure to welcome back to St Mark's today two women who have between them devoted so many years to the College and whom it is always a joy to have back with us, Mrs Okche Ashwin and Mrs Angela Bannon. You are so welcome always.

This morning we want especially to honour the eighth Master, **Rose Alwyn**.

On 3 February 1984, Rosemary Alwyn wrote from Canberra, where she had been a student for 12 years at Canberra Girls' Grammar School, to the Master of St Mark's College, Adelaide:

“Dear Reverend Thomson,

Thank you so much for your kindness in sending me the application forms to St Mark's College. I feel I could make a fair contribution in all aspects and activities in College life.”

37 years later, after an *outstanding* contribution to this College's life, as you know, Rose Alwyn is to join the Reverend Peter Thomson and all other Masters of the College with her magnificent portrait by Robert Hannaford hanging with theirs above the High Table.

And the kindness which the young Rose attributed to Reverend Thomson has been the hallmark of her own contributions throughout – in which I include her own great kindness to me personally.

Following in her father's footsteps in coming to St Mark's, Rose was a resident student here from 1984 - the third year of women students at St Mark's - to 1986, while she studied for a Bachelor of Arts, first at Flinders and then at the University of Adelaide, including winning the Lia Watson Prize for third-year Social Sciences. Rose served as Secretary of the College Club in 1986, and through her undergraduate years represented the University of Adelaide in tennis, and St Mark's in hockey, swimming, netball, athletics, tennis, and debating.

After graduating, Rose served from 1989 to 1994 as the first female Secretary of the Old Collegians' Association, and then in 1994-95 as its first female President. By then, Rose was already a member of the College Council and of the College Foundation.

All this reflected the passionate enthusiasm for and unwavering commitment to St Mark's which have marked all Rose's countless contributions – her “countless gifts of love” for St Mark's and its students - including as Dean from 2003 to 2007, and then as Master from 2008 to 2019.

Rose came to the position of Dean in 2003, under Master John Bannon, from the Service to Youth Council, where she had worked since 1995, including from 1998 onwards as General Manager of the Youth Services Division. This involved extensive experience in youth and community services focused on homeless and “at risk” young people, and built on Rose's earlier years of experience in training and employment services for the unemployed.

During busy years both as Dean and with her and husband David's family of five children, Rose - ever organised – in 2006 also successfully completed a Masters of Business Administration at the University of Adelaide, including winning the Baron Partners Prize for Strategic Management – with the highest mark for Strategic Management out of over 200 students in that year.

In 2007, as John Bannon was preparing to retire, the selection committee to find his successor received applications from “a strong field of candidates including local, interstate and overseas applicants”. In announcing Rose's appointment from this strong field, the Chairman of Council, Richard Burchnall, said what everyone knew to be true: quote - “Ms Alwyn has been an outstanding Dean and is held in very high regard by the College community.”

Over the subsequent almost-12 years as Master, Rose gave of herself with tireless devotion to St Mark's and its students. When, in August 2019, some 180 Collegians and friends of the College gathered to farewell her as she left to take up the Wardenship of St John's College at the University of Queensland, the warm tributes paid reflected her contributions in so many ways:

- her working with hundreds of young people, women and men alike - inspiring so many, and aiming to develop future leaders;
- her genuine care for individual students, in the lives of so many of whom she made a real difference – several of whom are here today to thank Rose for that;
- her work to increase the value and number of scholarships that are awarded annually through the generous philanthropic support of our College community;
- her work to expand significantly the academic support offered by the College so that every student had the best opportunity to achieve their personal best;
- the remarkable improvements in the College facilities, furthering the College's Master Plan, including the opening of the Learning Commons, East Wing, and the multi-level car-park, and the College Green, along with key refurbishments and upgrades to many buildings – for which, again, generous philanthropic support has been crucial; and
- her deep engagement with her fellow Old Collegians and with friends of the College.

From 2016 to 2018, Rose had served as President of University Colleges Australia, the group that represents residential university colleges around the country. At her farewell from St Mark's in 2019, Dr Ian Walker from ANU, representing University Colleges Australia, spoke of Rose's "energy and leadership" and her – quote - "encouragement and support of all our Colleges and Halls ... to be the best possible places of scholarship and safety, of community and care, of respect and renewal, of collegiality and (where needed) change." "No one", he said, "has been or is more committed to this task."

Robert Hannaford has painted what I think is a brilliant portrait of Rose. To both subject and artist go many thanks and warmest congratulations.

As I mentioned earlier, Rose's portrait will tomorrow be hung next to another striking Hannaford portrait – that of Rose's predecessor as Master, John Bannon. These are two of five Hannafords in this Hall, in our small but significant collection of portraits that also includes, amongst others, two by Sir William Dargie and two by Sir Ivor Hele.

To unveil Robert Hannaford's portrait of Rose, and then to speak, it is my great pleasure to call on Rose herself.

...

Thank you so much, Rose, for your remarks.

This superb and powerful portrait will both adorn the Hall and be a daily reminder to us of your outstanding contribution to the College.

Thank you also for your insightful remarks about gender equity and about celebrating the women of St Mark's.

It was partly because of Rose that, when I arrived at St Mark's late in 2019, I already knew of some of the outstanding people connected with this College – and I rapidly learned that there are many more men and women of St Mark's who have made a difference in the world in diverse ways. Some have already been recognised by the College, some in this Hall – such as our Honorary Fellows and those behind me. And there are many others who merit recognition.

But, for reasons Rose has clearly expressed, one of the things that greeted me 18 months ago was a clear determination on the part of the College Board and of others that, as the College heads towards marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of co-education and as it re-emphasises its commitment to gender equality, the gender imbalance in the portraits in the Dining Hall should start to be redressed.

There was also a consensus that, amongst the many St Mark's women who merited recognition, the first new women – after Rose – to be added should be the four distinguished St Mark's women of influence whose photographic portraits are unveiled today.

All are people of distinction and standing, of influence, and of significance for the College in diverse ways. Two are women of distinction from the very first year of St Mark's women – one of these a prize-winning Australian novelist who has been recognised as a Distinguished Collegian, the other a long-serving member of our governance bodies and acting chair of the College Board who has been honoured in the Order of Australia for her outstanding

professional and community service work. Another of these photographs is of the first woman Chair of our College Board, and another is of our first – and so far only – female Rhodes Scholar.

By any measure, these are outstanding St Mark's women of influence, and great exemplars of the quality of St Mark's women.

The photograph of Georgia Blain is an old photograph for which we are very grateful to her family, and the other three are photographs taken here at the College very early last year by the photographer Duncan Udawatta.

Had it not been for the pandemic, these four photographs would have been unveiled over a year ago, and it is good that they can be unveiled today, and then hung tomorrow in the north-west corner of this Hall.

### **Georgia Blain**

The first photographic portrait is of the late Georgia Blain, who was last year officially recognised by the College Board as a Distinguished Collegian.

Born in 1964, Georgia Blain was a celebrated novelist and, as I have mentioned, one of the first women to attend the College in 1982. Already a prize-winning poet when she entered St Mark's, Georgia went on to be, in the words of one writer, "acclaimed as a novelist, short story writer and essayist who transformed the everyday into works of extraordinary beauty and clarity".

After completing her Arts degree at the University of Adelaide, Georgia finished her Law degree at the University of Sydney. Working first as a journalist and then as a copyright lawyer (who continued to write on copyright issues for many years), in the mid-1990s she turned to writing full-time, and her award-winning debut novel, *Closed for Winter*, set in seaside Adelaide, appeared in 1998.

Her several subsequent books include the novels *Candelo* (1999), *The Blind Eye* (2001), *Names for Nothingness* (2004), *Too Close to Home* (2011), and *Between a Wolf and a Dog* (2016), the young adult novels *Darkwater* (2010) and *Special* (2016), and the short story collection *The Secret Lives of Men* (2013). Her *Births, Deaths and Marriages: True Tales* (2008) was published as she undertook a PhD in creative writing at the University of Western Sydney, and she continued with other writing, including regular columns for *The Saturday Paper* as she battled against brain cancer in 2015-16.

Several of Georgia's books were shortlisted for major literary awards, and *Between a Wolf and a Dog* was awarded the 2017 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Fiction and the 2016 Queensland Literary Award for Fiction. *Closed for Winter* was adapted for film in 2009, starring Natalie Imbruglia and filmed in Adelaide, and *The Museum of Words: a memoir of language, writing, and mortality*, was published posthumously in 2017.

On her death in December 2016, just days before the death of her mother, the journalist Anne Deveson, Georgia Blain was described by one obituarist as "one of Australia's finest writers". "There is", the obituarist wrote, "no better way of remembering Georgia than reading her work."

Georgia Blain is remembered at St Mark's with warm admiration, as a Distinguished Collegian, and now with this photographic portrait of the young and vibrant Georgia Blain.

It is my privilege to invite Georgia Blain's husband, Andrew Taylor, to unveil it, and then to say a few words.

Thank you so much, Andrew.

### **Dr Rachel Buxton**

Rachel Buxton was a C.A.S. Hawker Scholar at St Mark's College in 1993-97, and served as College Club President in 1997, when she was also awarded the Collegians' Prize. She graduated from the University of Adelaide in 1997 with First Class Honours in English Literature, and the University Medal.

Rhodes Scholar for South Australia for 1998, Rachel completed a Masters and a Doctorate in Oxford in English language and literature. Her thesis on the influence of Robert Frost on Northern Irish poetry – a topic inspired by a suggestion from the then Master of St Mark's College, Robin Ashwin – was later published by Oxford University Press.

Rachel was Wilkinson Research Fellow and Assistant Dean at Worcester College, Oxford (2001-2), and Salvesen Junior Fellow and Tutor for Women at New College, Oxford (2002-5), also undertaking internships with McKinsey & Co. and at the UK Cabinet Office.

While serving as Senior Lecturer in American Literature at Oxford Brookes University in 2005-9, Rachel completed an Executive MBA with Distinction, again topping her year.

Rachel served as Senior Tutor of Merton College, Oxford, in 2009-10, then as Domestic Bursar of Lincoln College, Oxford, from 2010 to 2015, before again becoming Senior Tutor of Merton College until we were lucky enough to attract her back to St Mark's to become our Director of Learning early last year.

As Senior Tutor at Merton, Rachel managed all academic-related activities in one of Oxford's academically most successful colleges, and devoted considerable attention to supporting individual students in their academic and personal development

Recalling the positive difference which St Mark's made in her life, when she was appointed as Director of Learning, Rachel said that she was excited to take on this role at the College, seeing it as "a terrific opportunity to make a genuine difference at a critical stage in the lives of young people".

She has been doing just this brilliantly and with such positive impact since starting here in February last year, and we are all very grateful.

I would now invite Rachel to put her natural modesty aside and unveil this photographic portrait of herself.

### **Dr Angela Evans AM**

As you know, Angela Evans was, like Georgia Blain, one of the very first women students to enter St Mark's when it became coeducational in 1982. Angela was a resident student at St Mark's from 1982 to 1984 while she studied podiatry at what is now the University of South Australia, from which she later earned her PhD.

In 1983 and 1984, Angela served on the College Club Committee - in 1984, as Secretary. *The Lion* of 1984 recorded that she "undertook her position with great efficiency and style" – qualities evident in everything that Angela undertakes, as is what *The Lion* in 1983 described as "her unsinkable optimism".

Angela's service as a student representative to the College's Buildings and Grounds Committee in 1983 and 1984, and her later contribution as Treasurer of the Old Collegians' Association, foreshadowed a very major contribution to the governance of the College over some 15 years from 2006 to 2020. Angela served as a member of the College Council from 2006 to 2018, and as a member of the College Board from 2007 to last year, including as Acting Chair of the Board in 2018.

Angela's contribution to the College has been alongside outstanding professional contributions in the field of podiatry, with a focus on paediatrics and sports medicine, including as a clinician, a university teacher (including currently for La Trobe University), a much-published researcher, chair and other office-holder in various professional associations and regulatory bodies, and an NGO volunteer, most particularly with Walk for Life – Bangladesh, and the Clubfoot Aid Program.

The details of these and other contributions and significant professional recognition were spelt out in a strikingly impressive citation when, in 2019, Angela was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia – I quote – "for significant service to community health in the field of paediatric podiatry, and to professional standards".

As well as to the College and to podiatry in various ways, Angela has also given service to the Anglican Church, including through her long-standing leadership roles next door at St Peter's Cathedral, including as People's Warden and Honorary Lay Canon, at St Barnabas Theological College, and at Anglicare, with which I am delighted to report she has worked with leaders of our student Charitable Foundation to create a very fitting bond.

The Founders of St Mark's nearly a century ago believed that the College would encourage among its students what they described as "the ideal of service". Angela Evans has quite outstandingly fulfilled the Founders' ideal of service.

Angela, would you come forward to unveil your photograph, please?

## **Ms Linda Matthews**

In August 2018, following a search and selection process, Linda Matthews was appointed as – and I quote from the announcement - “the new Independent Chair of St Mark’s” – making her also the first female Chair of our College Board.

I can give personal testimony from my time at St Mark’s to the dedication, clarity of mind, shrewdness of judgement, wise and realistic counsel, and warmth and generosity of spirit which Linda has brought to this role, aiming always to do what is best for the students of this College, and upholding the values for which the College stands.

With her early years in Broken Hill and university education at Flinders University, Linda has also brought to her role at St Mark’s the experience and insights she had gained in, amongst various other roles, service for 14 years as South Australian Commissioner for Equal Opportunity from 1996 to 2010, as Queensland’s first Privacy Commissioner from 2010 to 2012, and as the Executive Director of Women NSW in the NSW Department of Families and Communities from 2012 to 2014.

On Linda’s leaving her long-standing position as South Australia’s Equal Opportunity Commissioner in 2010 to inaugurate the role of Privacy Commissioner in Queensland, her successor at the Equal Opportunity Commission paid tribute to the “substantial changes in the life of the Commission and its legislation” which she had overseen, including in increased efficiency, increased conciliation, and improved training.

Linda’s successor wrote: “On leaving, Linda was able to take pride in the fact that South Australia’s discrimination protections are more comprehensive than ever, although, as she would point out, there still remains work to be done.”

Linda has also held leadership roles in various not-for-profit organisations. These include serving as Board member and at times Chief Executive Officer of Catherine House, which supports women experiencing homelessness; as Board member of Adelaide Benevolent Society; and Chair of the disability organisation SCOSA. She has also held roles with such bodies as the Parks Community Legal Service, the SA Domestic Violence Prevention Unit, the SA Rape and Sexual Assault Service, and Survivors of Torture and Trauma Rehabilitation Services.

The announcement in 2018 of Linda’s appointment as Chair at St Mark’s said, and I quote: “The Interim Board and Council are delighted with the appointment of our new Chair whose strategic skills, clear vision, competence, and positive approach will lead the future directions of the College.”

In my view, from very close exposure, the hopes expressed in that statement have been more than amply fulfilled, and I for one am very grateful.

It is now my pleasure to invite our first female Board Chair, Linda Matthews, to unveil herself!

## **Conclusion**

I am sure you will agree that Rose's portrait on the wall behind me, and these photographic portraits of four other St Mark's women of influence, will adorn the Hall - powerful examples to current and future members of this College of what St Mark's women can be.

Thank you for being part of this Founders' Day and of this unveiling. I look forward to welcoming you for further events, including as next year we mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of coeducation here and as we head towards the centenary of the College in 2025.

Before bringing today's formal proceedings to a close, may I thank my staff colleagues and many students for all they have done to prepare for today – for which I am sure we are all very grateful.

I hope that you will now stay for a celebratory drink and a bite or two to eat around the pond.

Thank you – and enjoy!