



The Spirit of Siena



SIENA
COLLEGE
CAMBERWELL

Issue 13 | 2017

Mission Statement

Siena College, a Catholic secondary school in the Dominican tradition, offers young women an education which challenges them to make intelligent and responsible use of their personal gifts and develop a lifelong love of learning.

Vision

As a vibrant, faith filled, Catholic community we will provide exemplary and inspiring education with a commitment to justice, truth, reconciliation and compassion. In the spirit of St Catherine of Siena, by word and action, young women are nourished in faith and encouraged to spread the Good News and embrace the future with hope.

Values

We value and live the Dominican pillars of:

Prayer	by nurturing spirituality and celebrating as a community of Faith
Study	by striving for excellence, thinking critically and seeking truth
Service	by empowering young women to actively engage in local and global justice issues
Community	by recognising God's presence in others and fostering right relationships

Editorial Team

Tracey Grobbelaar, Susan Law,
Liz Merrett and Amy Stubbs

Photography

Susan Law and Amy Stubbs



Siena College
connecting girls • empowering young women

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The Siena College Editorial Team apologises for the following error in The Spirit Issue 12:

- The *Dominican Sisters Celebrating 150 Years* article on page 5, was written by Sr Elizabeth Hellwig OP



Message from the Principal



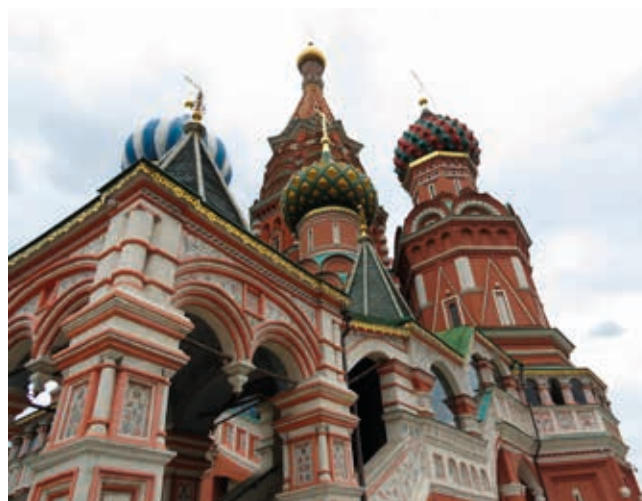
I was privileged to spend the final two weeks of Term 3 on enrichment leave in Eastern Europe in the company of fellow Principals. The focus of our pilgrimage was on hope and healing as we journeyed through Russia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Croatia. I encountered Dominicans in all the places I visited and was moved by the beauty of the orthodox churches and monasteries of St Petersburg, Moscow and Poland, the

icons and the faith filled pilgrims. I experienced great beauty and also some of the worst acts ever perpetrated by human beings in the concentration camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau. In all of that horror, I learned of extraordinary acts of love and sacrifice and I got to know a Pope a little better, John Paul II. He too experienced suffering and loss and the horrors of World War II. Out of his experiences grew a conviction that responding with violence would only replace the Nazis with other 'Nazis' with a different name and a different face. Throughout his ministry, he preached peace and harmony between different faith traditions.

On my travels, there were many signs of hope and healing in the aftermath of wars and communism and for me, a renewed sense of the importance of our Mission as a Catholic school in the Dominican tradition. We aim to educate the women of Siena to make intelligent and responsible use of their liberty, to be women with a deep respect for all human beings and an appreciation that we are all made in the image and likeness of God; that the first and most important commandments call us to love God and to love one another.

May the young women from the Class of 2017, who we farewelled recently, be women who break down walls and appreciate their responsibility to care for all of God's creation. May they take up the invitation to be Christians who are called, not just to take a moral stand, but to search for knowledge – Truth – and to act to make the world a better place. I thank them for their commitment to our College over the past six years and for their donation of funds. They have asked that their donation be used for drinking fountains in the refurbished Undercroft area and for the new chickens that have been reinstated in the Eastern terrace alongside the vegetable gardens that were planted by Year 9 students.

At the end of October, I attended a book launch of *The Footy Lady*. Written by Stephanie Asher, it is the inspiring and moving story of Susan Alberti AC who graduated from Siena in 1964. Susan's story is one of courage, vision and perseverance and like my enrichment leave, a life journey of hope and healing. The book makes you laugh and cry and the author described how she too was changed through the writing of it and through getting to know Susan.



Caption



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Gaynor Robson-Garth and Susan Alberti AC



The Class of 2017 at their final College Assembly

Message from the Principal

It has been a busy year, one in which we honoured the courageous Dominican Sisters who left the port of Dublin on a wooden sailing ship one hundred and fifty years ago. Their legacy was Dominican schools along the East coast of Australia and later, Siena College where we named our Amphitheatre in their honour in 2007. This year, in the Convent cloister, we acknowledged and honoured all the Dominican Sisters who lived and worked at Siena, the Prioresses, Board Chairs and the Principals of past decades on whose shoulders we stand. We opened the Alumnae Wall to commemorate women who have graduated over past decades. Their names are inscribed on the Convent walls, the place that is most treasured by all who lived, learned and worked at Siena.

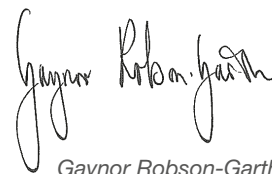
The Siena Convent is a place of special beauty that breathes and visibly manifests the tradition and 800 year history that Siena College is a part of. It is evident in the Italianate design, in the connection to St Dominic's birthplace in Spain through the orange and cumquat trees, in the individual designs on the capitols of the pillars that speak of a tradition that values the unique gifts and creativity of every person, in the sense of tranquillity that pervades, and in the Chapel which is a place of prayer and contemplation that is at the core of our tradition and our search for Truth.

May the stories of the past continue to expand our imaginations of what is possible and of what is asked of us in our day and in our Truth searching. The Convent cloister and commemorative plaques offer the Siena women of today and tomorrow, a sense of where we came from, of who we are and of who we aspire to be. The Wall and the Convent bind us together as a family and as community.



Sr. Mary-Clare Holland OP, Sr Teresa Tebaia OP, Sr Jenny Gerathy OP, Sr Loretta Arohikeni OP, Sr Julianna Drobik OP, Sr Elizabeth Hellwig OP

As the year draws to a close, we thank the Dominican Sisters for their ongoing support of our community, particularly retiring Prioress, Sr Judith Lawson OP and the Leadership Team of the past four years, Sr Elizabeth Hellwig OP, Sr Patricia Madigan OP, Sr Jennifer Gerathy OP and Sr Anne Ryan OP. Following the eighth Chapter meeting of the Congregation, our warmest congratulations are extended to Sr Mary-Clare Holland OP who is the newly elected Prioress as of the start of 2018 and the Sisters elected as Councillors: Loretta Arohikeni OP, Julianna Drobik OP, Jenny Gerathy OP, Elizabeth Hellwig OP and Teresa Tebaia OP. We wish them many blessings and offer our prayerful support as they take up these new roles.



Gaynor Robson-Garth
Principal



Caption



Camberwell Religious Gather for 150 Years



The small community of Dominican Sisters in Melbourne invited Dominicans and the local religious in St Dominic's Parish to celebrate Foundation Day in this, the 150th year of the Congregation. Dominican Friars and Brothers, Dominican Sisters of Malta, Vietnamese Dominican Sisters, the Sisters of Nazareth, Sister Disciples, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary and Carmelite and

Fr Ken Peterson joined in the celebration evening at St Dominic's Parish Centre. Sr Margaret Fields OP, gave a brief overview of our foundation in Maitland, New South Wales in 1867. A presentation of historical pictures and information provided an interesting talking point during the evening. Guests sang in chorus as the Sisters cut the anniversary cake. A good night was had by all!

Sr Julianna Drobik OP



Sr Frances Caine OP, Sr Margaret Mary Brown OP, Sr Julianna Drobik OP, Sr Kathleen Murphy OP, Sr Margaret Fields OP

Siena College Community Celebrates

The Siena College community celebrated the 150th anniversary of the congregation's foundation in Australia and paid tribute to the eight pioneer Sisters who arrived from Ireland to begin the ministry of education in Maitland, New South Wales, on 10 September 1867.

The Sisters' long sea voyage was recalled, with reference to the *Martha Birnie* journal, in a moving liturgy and Principal, Gaynor Robson-Garth, shared her reflection on the occasion of this significant milestone in the history of the congregation.

The students prayed in thanksgiving for the inspiration of the pioneer Sisters, that their example of courage, trust, resilience and spirit of adventure, would continue to inspire all the members of the Australian Dominican family for years to come.

Following the Assembly students moved to Pioneer Place. Lanterns were lit for each of the Pioneer sisters and their names were read out as a beautiful native Australian wreath was laid in their memory.



Development at Siena College

The Next Chapter Begins



Over the past few months Siena College has embarked on two major projects: the opening of the Alumnae Wall on 26 July 2017 and the commencement of the building works, including the creation of a new Music and Performing Arts Wing, the refurbishment of the Undercroft and Stage 1 of the Agora and Terraced Gardens.

In the heart of the College is Siena's unique cloister, a place of prayer and contemplation throughout the school's history. The opening of the Alumnae Wall and blessing took place in the presence of our Dominican Sisters, alumnae, staff and students. This project is part of a larger plan to restore the Convent to its place as the iconic entrance to our College.

The Alumnae Wall blessing commenced in the Hall with one hundred and fifty members of the Siena College community in attendance. A beautiful liturgy was prepared and hosted by our Deputy Principal Mission and Identity, Anne Muirhead. We thanked God for our long history of women of faith in the Judeo Christian and Dominican traditions, and, most especially, our College alumnae. With texts, hymns, prayers, a special sung litany calling on women from our story and an inspiring address from the Prioress of the Dominican Sisters, Sr Judy Lawson OP, on the place and reality of 'walls' in our personal and global realities, the gathered assembly were united in one heart as members of the Siena College community.

Students, alumnae and Dominican sisters bearing lanterns led the gathering into the cloister where Sr Judy blessed each panel of the Alumnae Wall bearing the names of alumnae, local Sisters, Prioresses, Board Chairs and Principals.

The ceremony concluded with a special text written for the occasion:

Siena Cloister

*Walls focus our lives on all that is true
Embracing roses and oranges, thorns and fruit*

*Walls hold aloft capitals of proud beauty
Pronouncing integrity and uniqueness*

*Walls echo with music and mirth, prayer and promise
Silence succumbing to song and silliness, lessons and love*

*Walls point heavenward to sun and moon
Heaven stretched canvas of gum leaf and southern cross*

*Walls inscribed with joy and sorrow, life upon life
Women-stories strengthen and sustaining*

*Walls whisper words of comfort and consolation
Prayers seep into stone, warming hearts and praying hands*

*Walls strengthening, not separating
Urging us with love and longing, justice and joy*

*Walls inviting a full future for all, named and unnamed
A Veritas-vision for a world made whole and holy.*



College Captains, Sinead Hickey and Sasha White, lead the procession into the Convent and Cloisters



View of the Alumnae Wall in the Convent and Cloisters



Loyis Gibson née Olive (Class of 1944) and College Archivist, Catherine Judd



Sisters, Mary Clarke OP (Class of 1967) and Margaret Brosnan (Class of 1962)



Sr Judith Lawson OP blessing the Alumnae Wall

Every gift, no matter how large or small, is valued and appreciated. For information on our **Bequest Program**, please contact Tracey Grobbelaar on 9835 0266 or via email at tgrobbelaar@siena.vic.edu.au.



Development at Siena College

Building Works

The College has appointed Harris HMC as our builders, in conjunction with Williams Ross Architects. Harris HMC have worked with the College previously on the Thomas Aquinas building works in 2011. The timeline envisaged for this project will be commencement in Term 4, 2017 to completion at the end of the 2018 January holidays. Our Music and Performing Arts teachers and students will occupy their new home from the start of Term 1, 2018. This will free up the Convent and Cloisters for the next stage of the Butterfly Campaign, Pillar IV.

The major demolition works have been completed over the holidays and the internal works are progressing well. Over the coming months construction of the main façade elements will begin, including the rendering of the new Music and Performing Arts area, installation of new window frames, the establishment of additional gardens and lighting and paving to the entrance of the Undercroft. The Undercroft refurbishment and the first stage of the Agora and Terraced Gardens will provide our students with an additional area to gather and enjoy their surroundings. Williams Ross Architects' design embraces bright colours, collaborative working spaces, better acoustics, and an area where the students can relax and enjoy the company of one another.

We have created an area for the Siena Parents' Association and Second Hand Uniform Shop to continue to provide a service to the Siena College community. Seating leading to the Agora and Terraced Gardens will provide additional spaces for the students to enjoy the outdoors.

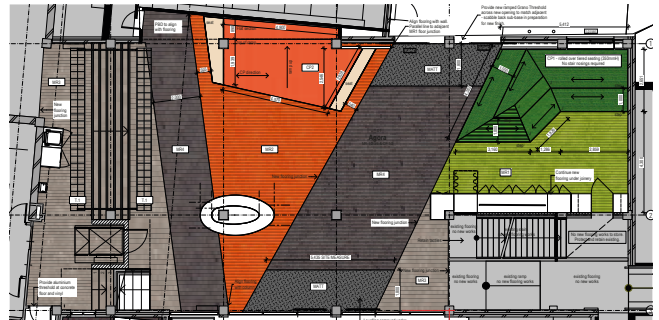
Stay tuned to see the progress of our next chapter.

Tracey Grobbelaar

Director of Development and Community Relations



Williams Ross Architects Perspective View 1 of the Undercroft



Williams Ross Architects Floor Finishes Plan for the Undercroft



Williams Ross Architects Perspective View 2 of the Undercroft



The new home of the Music and Performing Arts Faculty

Learning and Teaching



During Semester 2, we have continued to provide a range of opportunities for our students and staff to foster a culture committed to continuous improvement. The following articles are just some of these opportunities that enhance the learning and teaching program.



Developing a Shared Understanding of Learning

The teaching staff are working collaboratively to create a shared understanding of learning at Siena, utilising current research and practice, as well as tapping into the wealth of expertise and experience of our own Siena staff. This semester, all teaching staff have participated in teaching and learning meetings held after school in the Auditorium. The purpose of these meetings is to develop a definition of learning at Siena College.

The purpose of our Professional Learning sessions is to work collaboratively to:

- Create a definition of learning
- Come to a shared understanding of what 'good learning' looks like at Siena
- Come to a shared understanding of what 'good teaching' looks like at Siena
- Come to a shared understanding of the characteristics of an effective learner at Siena
- Be able to consider student and parent voices in the above

The desired outcomes of the sessions are to:

- Identify the behaviours of what 'good learning' looks like at Siena
- Identify the behaviours of what 'good teaching' looks like at Siena
- Implement Professional Learning Teams in 2018 to explore, through an Action Research Model, the characteristics of high performing schools that would make an impact on student learning at Siena College

Our new Leaders of Pedagogy in 2018, Donna Laughlin and Rosanna Merriweather, will work closely with the teaching staff to ensure we are engaging with best practice teaching strategies to enhance the learning outcomes of all students at the College.





Learning and Teaching

Year 9 Garden Collective Project

The Food Technology Faculty is very excited to be working with the Office for Justice and Peace and Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM), by partaking in the school trial of the 2017 Garden Collective Project, now known as The Food Security Network (TFSN).

TFSN is a project committed to growing food for others. It teaches the life skills of planting, maintaining and harvesting a productive crop which is then harvested and donated to the community via FareShare and the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC). The food is delivered within hours of harvest and incorporated into meals for soup vans, homeless shelters and food banks around Victoria.

The girls have embraced the project and have readily accepted the responsibility of watering the garden beds and caring for their crop. They were keen to see how much their plants had grown each fortnight and happily rushed out to the garden, despite the often cold and wet weather conditions. Incorporated into the practical tasks, the girls have studied areas encompassing; living on a low income, statistics of poverty and how they can help to build a resilient community.



Madison Hume and Elizabeth Catis



Nikoletta Genovezos



Krista Korfiatis, Emilie Candotti, Ebony Williams, Charlotte Kiley, Amy Fisher, Natarsha Kocan, Emily Turchiarelli



Year 9 Healthy Food by Design students with teacher, Lyn Alexander and TFSN Director, Chris Saray

Embedding Study Skills for Learning

During this year, our VCE students have taken part in a number of programs presented by Elevate Education. Elevate's high impact seminars and workshops help students improve their study techniques, increase motivation, build confidence and lift exam performance. Elevate have worked closely with our Year 12 students in the past, and in 2017 our Year 11 students also took part in these workshops for the first time. Over the duration of the VCE program, the students will take part in the following seminars: Study Sensei, Time Management, Ace Your Exams, Student Elevation, Memory Mnemonics and the Finishing Line.

All students are encouraged to make use of the skills and techniques presented in the seminars to ensure that they continue to display effective work and study habits. We look forward to continuing our association with Elevate Education in 2018.



Elevate Education Seminar

Staff Learning Series

On Wednesday, 6 September the staff gathered for our Term 3 Learning Series. The aim of this Learning Series was to continue to develop our understanding of the components of the Learning Management System (LMS), Siena Central and was led by Donna Laughlin and Tina Di Camillo. The focus was on using assessment tools on Siena Central, learning how to assess online and provide feedback to students via the LMS. In 2018, we will work towards continuous reporting for all students in Years 7 to 12.



Our Learning Management System, Siena Central

Mission and Identity

Praying the Dominican Way



One of St Dominic's gifts to the world was his prayer life, which engaged the heart, soul, mind and body in creative gestures of praise and worship. Across Semester 2 the Siena community has gathered to pray in a variety of ways: through Morning Prayer, our weekly Eucharist, staff prayer at morning briefings and a few *distinctly Dominican* liturgies.

What do Mother Agnes Bourke, Soeur Curtolane and Jane of Aza have in common? They are all characters in the great story of Dominican women throughout the ages. In response to the Alumnae Wall Campaign, *Be Part of Our Story*, we crafted a special Litany of Dominican Women to be sung at the Blessing of the Alumnae Wall. A Litany is a prayer that calls on holy women and men in our tradition to pray with and for us. It was a very powerful and moving experience to hear our students join their voices with women from the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, early martyrs and Church leaders, along with St Dominic's early female followers, the eight pioneering Sisters who ventured from Ireland to Maitland 150 years ago and the women who were at the genesis of the Siena story here in Camberwell.

Tradition tells that the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary was given to St Dominic directly by Our Lady. It remains an important devotion for Dominicans and for Catholics more widely, and its importance was emphasised in modern times by Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*. In their Religious Education program, Year 9 students study a unit titled *Women of Faith*, focussing on Mary, the Mother of God, and our College patron, Catherine of Siena. As part of our St Dominic's Day Eucharist in August our Chaplain, Fr Kevin Toomey OP, blessed rosary beads that will be used by Year 9s as they deepen their knowledge of women of faith and understanding of the place of prayer in our spiritual tradition.

Sheila Flynn OP writes: *With his body, Dominic unfolded the narrative of God's story in him.* Through our words, actions, song, colour, silence and prayer the Siena community continues to become God's body in this world.

Anne Muirhead

Deputy Principal Mission and Identity



Names



Names



St Dominic's Day Mass



The SRC 2017



Mission and Identity

Year 12 Graduation Mass



Year 12 Waratah



Year 12 Kurrajong



Year 12 Dianella



Year 12 Cassia

Night of Change



The 2017 Night of Change was once again an evening full of fun, laughter and off key singing. The purpose of the night was to raise funds for Kopanang. While we often talk about Siena's Kopanang fundraising, we do not often speak in detail about the extraordinary benefits that Kopanang has on the women and families of Tsakane. This year, Night of Change raised over \$5,500 through ticket sales, a raffle and silent auction.

These funds will allow the Kopanang Community Trust to continue providing the following range of services:

- Skills training in embroidery, bead making, quilting and screen printing
- Human resource development: communication, conflict management
- Computer training, driving lessons and leadership training
- HIV/AIDS ongoing training and education
- Outreach program for sick members and their immediate neighbours. Providing some medical support, as well as immune building cereal, vitamins, home visits and accompaniment to hospitals and clinics, funeral and bereavement support
- A weekly art class for the orphans
- Dikeledi (meaning, long tears) therapy group. A forum for members to share their life stories, particularly their sorrows and struggles. They produce creative quilts that express their voice, their beauty and their hope

Siena College has also committed to paying the university tuition for one of the Kopanang women, Refiloe Sibisi. Funds raised at Night of Change will also go towards this endeavour.

The night included two rounds of Disco Bingo as well as a highly competitive session of Name that Song. Performances by the Siena College Stage Band as well as our talented Year 12 musicians added to the buoyant atmosphere on the evening.

Many thanks to all the College families who not only attended the evening, but sourced donations.

Kate Gotlib

Head of Student Formation and Justice Education



Siena College
connecting girls • empowering young women

Open Mornings 2018

Monday, 26 February

Friday, 23 March

Friday, 4 May

Friday, 8 June

9.30am – 11.00am

www.siena.vic.edu.au

Indigenous Immersion Experience



During the September holidays, a combined group of twenty-four Year 10 and 11 students from Siena College and Our Lady of Sion College, set off to the Northern Territory to begin their ten day Indigenous Immersion experience. We were met at the Alice Springs Airport by our Aboriginal guides, Jungala and Colleen, who provided us with a unique and memorable learning experience.

Over the time we were away, we travelled across the spectacular and often rugged landscape of the Central Australian desert, from Alice Springs to Uluru. For the first four nights we camped on properties owned by indigenous people, learning to appreciate the peace and timeless beauty of this ancient landscape. We listened to Colleen share her traditional song line stories and knowledge of bush medicines, helped to gather 'bush tucker' and wondered at the countless stars in the night sky.

During our experience we met with artists, teenagers, teachers, community leaders and Elders. We listened to stories telling of a proud and ancient people, with an enduring connection and respect for their land. We also gained an appreciation of indigenous culture and were encouraged to think deeply about the many ongoing challenges faced by our First Peoples.

On return to Melbourne, our students have spoken fondly of this wonderful opportunity, of the time spent together and friendships made. Our Indigenous Immersion experience has provided each of us with valuable insights into Aboriginal culture and customs, highlighting an often confronting past and a continued battle for recognition and equality.

Bronwyn Ilott and Ansalie Hanrahan
Teachers

My most memorable moment was when we went to Simpson's Gap. Being able to see and appreciate the beauty of nature without having to view it through a screen was amazing and something that I wouldn't normally do. I loved this place as it was so peaceful and beautiful to listen to the sound of the fresh running water. I also loved being able to take off our shoes and listen to the Aboriginal stories tied to this place. Overall it was an amazing experience and something I will never forget. Cheylan Webb, Year 10

After the Immersion, I started to recognise what I have in my life and how it's such a privilege when compared to others. This is a positive change in me because I used to only pay attention to what I don't have and always hoped for something better. This experience has made me think more and I also feel more thankful for everything I have in life. Grace Liu, Year 10

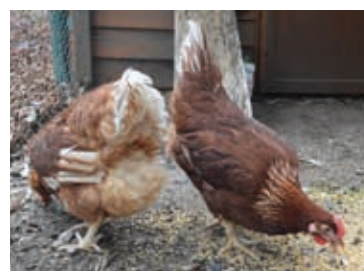
The 2017 Indigenous Immersion experience was by far the most memorable and surreal ten days of my life. I got to experience things I thought I would never have the opportunity to do. Additionally, I met a whole new bunch of girls from Sion who I am now lucky to call my friends. I encourage all girls to take part in this incredible experience as it will be a trip that you will never forget and one which you will be so thankful for. Sally Keys, Year 11

The Immersion enabled me to form a deeper understanding of our country through a completely unique and an amazing experience with the original owners of the land. Time is something we have so little of in all of our busy and loud lives; however, the Indigenous Immersion experience allowed us the time and space to consider the culture of the First Australians, whilst discovering ourselves as young women. Hannah Petrowski, Year 11



Principal's Morning Tea

The Class of 2017 enjoyed a morning tea of cupcakes and refreshments with Mrs Robson-Garth and the Alumnae Association Co Presidents, Kate Gotlib and Gayle Peggie. The Class of 2017 gifted the College new chooks and funds to be used towards the installation of water fountains and a music system in the new refurbished undercroft area.



Visual Arts and Technology Exhibition 2017



Each year, the annual Visual Arts and Technology Exhibition is the highlight of our faculty. This event celebrates the achievements and talents of students across all year levels and across the wide spectrum of Art and Design subjects that are offered at Siena College.

This year we have seen a diverse range of artistic and design media employed. Some students worked with traditional media in highly skilful ways. Other students used non traditional media and design approaches or pushed the envelope with highly conceptual ideas.

Mrs Robson-Garth awarded the Principal's Choice Prize to Claire Gardner for her intriguing mixed media work exploring the impact of family upbringing on identity and self. Her series of embroidered photographic prints on fabric represent the differences and similarities of her family's physical features.

The People's Choice Prize was awarded to Jessica Sexton who received nearly fifty percent of all votes. Her series of artworks were inspired by her travels through Nepal and convey the surreal beauty of the Himalayan region and Nepalese culture.

As a Visual Arts teacher, it has always been very rewarding to witness the artistic growth of students as they progress from Years 7 through to Year 12. Congratulations to all students who had their work displayed in the exhibition.

Michelle Theron
Head of Arts and Technology Faculty



Gaynor Robson-Garth and Principal's Choice Award Winner, Claire Gardner



Jessica Sexton



Sinead Hickey



Year 7 Student Work



Clarissa Smith



Siena College Alumnae



The new Alumnae Wall was unveiled in July in the Siena College Convent and Cloisters. The decade panels, commencing from 1940, are inscribed with past students' names and their final year at the College. In addition to remembering our alumnae, the Wall serves as a tribute to our Dominican Sisters, Prioresses, Board Chairs and Principals.

The Alumnae Wall is an ongoing project, enabling alumnae to inscribe their names in the future. Inscriptions can be registered online at www.sienacollect.com.au/alumnaewall2017-2018

Our annual reunion season provides another opportunity for past students to reconnect with the College. On 21 October, alumnae from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s returned to the College for a Reunion Brunch. We always enjoy listening to their stories about Siena and the friendships they formed.

Our Decade Reunions for the Classes of 1977 and 1987 and the Classes of 1997 and 2007 were held in September. Our guests gathered in the Hall for canapés and drinks, followed by a tour of the College. They then had the option of reconvening in a private room at Hellenic Republic in Kew for dinner and further reminiscing. We are greatly indebted to Natalie Tricarico (Class of 1994) who has been instrumental in securing the partnership between Siena College and Hellenic.

This year, we also introduced a Five Year Reunion for the Class of 2012. During the short time since these students left, much has changed at the College and they were impressed by the new facilities in the St Catherine Centre.



Class of 2012 Five Year Reunion



1940s, 1950s, 1960s Reunion Brunch

Liz Merrett
Alumnae Coordinator



Class of 1977 40 Year Reunion



Class of 1987 30 Year Reunion



Class of 1997 20 Year Reunion



Class of 2007 10 Year Reunion

Alumnae News

Lifelong Friends

Each year, a special group of ladies meet for lunch. They came to Siena in the 1960s and the connections they formed in those formative years remain strong today.



Back: Anne Hocking née Hardiman, Margaret Marks née King
Front: Margaret Vines, Nola Garvin née Thompson,
Yvonne Minton née Rooney, Merree Janke née Gleisner,
Judy Gallagher née Kelleher, Pauline Wigglesworth née Carroll

Carolyn Pethick (Class of 1978)

Carolyn Pethick was School Captain in 1978. Carolyn's memoir, *To Hell and Back*, details her trials and tribulations working as a police woman within the ranks of the Victoria Police Force from the early 1980s. This is a story about one person's struggle to say and do the right thing, to follow procedure, no matter what the eventual cost to herself or her career.



Dr Clare Fedele (Class of 1999)

Siena alumna, Dr Clare Fedele has been named as one of thirty female scientists and technologists in Australia as the first Superstars of STEM (to smash stereotypes and forge a new generation of role models for young women and girls).



More than 300 applicants vied for a spot to be a Superstar, with the successful candidates to receive training and development to use social media, television, radio and public speaking opportunities to carve out a more diverse face for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Announced by the Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Senator the Honourable Arthur Sinodinos AO, the women will learn how to speak about their science and inspire others to consider a career in STEM.

Molly Welsh and Claire Bohan (Class of 2014)



Alumnae, Molly Welsh and Claire Bohan in Siena, Italy

Alumnae Association



The 2018 Careers Showcase Presenters

The Alumnae Association continues to go from strength to strength. This year's events have grown markedly in scope and breadth as the Association has consolidated ties with some past students and forged new relationships with many others.

The Careers Showcase was again an incredible display of the many and varied pathways to success experienced by our alumnae. This year there were fifteen panels. The choice was pleasingly diverse, ranging from allied health to environmental studies, medicine, midwifery and creative design.

The evening, designed for students in Years 9 to 12, gives the students and their parents the opportunity to hear first hand about career paths and career journeys from a variety of alumnae in many and varied fields.

As in past years, part of the joy of organising this evening is that it gives us the opportunity to reconnect with past students and hear of their amazing achievements post Siena.

As Co Presidents, this is our third year of hosting this highly anticipated and very well attended event. As a rule, we like to share the load and never ask any panel members back twice. This allows for a range of alumnae to share their experiences from year to year. If you, or any past Siena students you know, would like to be involved in the 2018 Careers Showcase please contact the Alumnae Office.

Kate Gotlib and Gayle Peggie
Co Presidents of the Alumnae Association



Congratulations

Marriages

Sally Brookes (Class of 2006) was married to Chris Shaw on 18 February at Stones of the Yarra Valley. Their bridal party included Sally's sisters Bella, Eliza and Alex, and Amy Mason, all of whom attended Siena College.



Births



Jasper Jai was born on 16 June. Jasper attended the Class of 1997 Reunion in September along with his mum, **Amy Barber**. Amy's partner is Blair Gould. This precious photo of Jasper and his grandfather, Gerry Barber, was taken just prior to Gerry's passing in July this year.



Katherine Colebatch (Class of 2001) and partner Cameron are pleased to announce the safe arrival of their son. Liam Peter Colebatch was born on 8 January at Calvary John James Hospital in Canberra.



Renee Imbesi also attended the Class of 1997 reunion along with her daughter, Navya, born on 11 August. Renee and her partner, Anoop Nair, have three children: Serena, aged five, Ashwin aged three, and Navya.



Stephanie Costa (Class of 2006) and husband, Matt Vardy, announce the safe arrival of their son Jack on 1 September.



Siena College Counsellor, **Jen Lear** and partner Phil welcome Hannah Mae. Hannah was born on 6 May.

We Remember

May they Rest in Peace

Gerry Barber passed away in July 2017. Gerry was a very active member of our community and made a significant contribution to our Siena Parents' Association during the 1990s. Gerry is sorely missed by his family, including **Amy** (Class of 1997) and **Sarah** (Class of 2000).

Sr Rosemary Boffa OCDM passed away peacefully at Mary MacKillop Aged Care in Hawthorn on 4 September.

Graham Bull, step grandfather of Audrey Tan (Year 11 student), passed away in April.

Brian Carty, husband of **Bernardine Carty** (Class of 1945), passed away in early September. Brian was the Bursar at Siena and worked alongside Sr Maura McAvoy in the 1980s

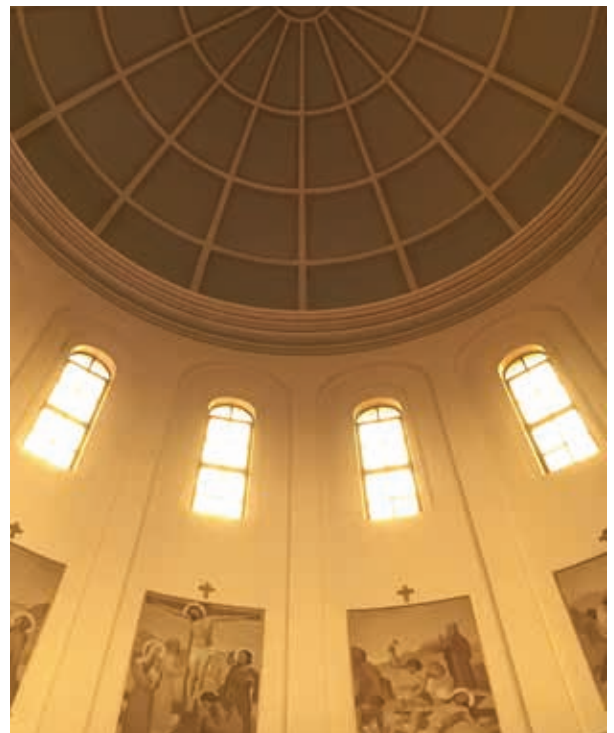
Karen Hudson, wife of Ross Hudson (past staff member) passed away on 14 September after a long illness.

Fr John (Kevin) McKenna passed away in August. Brother of **Marie Joyce** (Class of 1956), Fr John spent decades of his life in the Solomon Islands mission and was especially loved by the people of Wapina.

Sr Patricia Murray OP passed away at Mary MacKillop Aged Care on 7 September.

Helen Sowersby, née Fitzgerald (Class of 1952) passed away on 18 March. One of the first students of Siena, Helen was very fond of her school days and stayed in contact with many of her Siena friends.

Leonie Wheeler, née McKernan, passed away in July. Leonie is the mother of **Ann-Marie** (Class of 1983), and **Kelly** (Class of 1988).



Liz Merrett
Alumnae Coordinator

Archives



Journeys to anywhere take time. They may not take a long time or they could take months and months. Journeys are undertaken for a number of reasons. The journey of

eight Dominican Sisters from Ireland in 1867 to the other side of the world, New South Wales, was to begin a new chapter in the Dominican story. Knowing that they would almost certainly never return home, these young Dominican Sisters embarked on a journey that was fraught with challenges.

Sailing on the *Martha Birnie*, a small ship built in Scotland, the Sisters had to deal with cramped living conditions with very little privacy or personal space and trying to climb into sleeping births without falling out or standing on other people. They had to cope with seasickness, no bathing facilities, apart from buckets of seawater, and the impact of changing climates and weather conditions. Eventually our eight Sisters arrived in Sydney and then travelled to Maitland, New South Wales, where they arrived on 10 September, 1867.



Martha Birnie on the left in Aberdeen Harbour, 1876
Source: Aberdeen Maritime Museum



The Sisters' journey from Dublin, Ireland to Maitland, New South Wales

Who were these intrepid women?

Sr M. Agnes Bourke (1825–1881), Prioress, arrived in Australia aged forty-two. We are told that she was fairly slim, graceful, with a manner that combined elegance with warm friendliness. While she rigorously practised self discipline and expected it in others, hers was a considerate and gentle rule that won her affection and willing cooperation.*

Sr M Teresa Molloy (1832–1888), Sub Prioress, arrived in Australia aged thirty-five. Sr Teresa spoke French, German and Italian fluently, possessed mathematical ability and was a gifted musician and an artist of illumination. It is noted that she was tall, graceful and dignified in appearance and singularly gifted in many ways.*



Sr M Regis Dowley (1832–1911) arrived in Australia aged thirty-two. Sr M Regis was the first Dominican teacher in the infants' school at St John's Maitland, beginning 16 September 1867, only six days after the Sisters arrived in Maitland.*

Sr M Hyacinth Donnellan (1842–1911) arrived in Australia aged twenty-five. We remember Sr M Hyacinth especially because it was she who showed great wit and admirable perseverance in keeping up the writing of the daily diary on the *Martha Birnie*.*



Sr M Ignatius Finnegan (1839–1871) arrived in Australia aged twenty-eight. Sr M Ignatius had consumption (tuberculosis) at an advanced stage and it was hoped that the Maitland climate would stall its effects. She was a highly gifted musician and a good teacher.*

Sr M Augustine Fagan (1842–1876) arrived in Australia aged twenty-six. Sr M Augustine had care of the boarding school in its earliest years. Later the newly established novitiate was entrusted to her. She suffered from tuberculosis for many years and died having been in Maitland for only eight years.*

Sr M Brigid O'Brien (1839–1884), lay sister, arrived in Australia aged twenty-eight. Sr Brigid worked in the house in Maitland and died of consumption (tuberculosis). Hers was a hidden life, not even a death certificate has been found.*



Sr M Bernard Larkin (1844–1922), lay sister, arrived in Australia aged twenty-three. Community records tell us that Sister was small of stature, with large brown eyes and a round merry face. She was always full of fun and always ready for anything and everything that had to be undertaken.*

These eight brave and faithful women took part in a journey where their lives would be forever changed. Their journey into the unknown led to the establishment of a large Dominican community in eastern Australia and eventually, to the establishment of Siena Convent in 1926.

Catherine Judd and Maria Ang
College Archivists

* Biographical material drawn from Up she gets for up she must!
by Sr Elizabeth Hellwig OP

Archives

The McKenna Family

One of the many wonderful aspects of being a part of the Siena College community, is that it is not difficult to reconnect with families who have been integral to the history of the College and who have also given so much to the wider community. One such family is the McKenna family. Their connection to Siena goes back to the start of Siena College's history.

The family of eight consisted of James and Catherine and their six children: Jeanne, John, Kevin, Terry, Marie and Josephine. Jeanne McKenna was the eighth student enrolled at Siena College and her death in January of this year marked the end of a chapter in the history of the College.

Born in 1927, she and her six siblings were members of St Dominic's Parish. Her brother, Des, an accomplished sculptor, remembered crossing Riversdale Road to go to the front parlour of the original Siena Convent to have lessons with the sisters in preparation for his first communion. This little house, established as a convent in 1926, would see all the McKenna children at various times.

Jeanne was one of fifteen students who enrolled in the brand new secondary school that was known as Siena Convent School. She became School Prefect in 1942 and finished her secondary schooling in 1943. Fond of her time at Siena, Jeanne was one of a number of students who returned to the College in 1945 for the first official reunion of past students on 4 November. Jeanne kindly sent a copy of this photo to add to the Heritage Collection.



Jeanne in 1940



Jeanne, seventh from left in the front row

Jeanne studied commercial subjects at Siena and this led to a love of accounting, which she turned to her advantage when she began working. She married a local boy, Frank Johnston, who became a chemical engineer and they had seven children – one of whom, Patrice, came to Siena. In 1967, Jeanne and her family went to New York where Frank worked for Mobil Oil Research and Development. He specialised in developing clean air car exhausts. Jeanne and Frank remained in New York until their deaths this year, Jeanne on 25 January and Frank on 25 June.



City Square, *Warin the Wombat*, D McKenna 2002



Melbourne Museum, *Whale in Wood*, D McKenna 1995

The McKenna connections to Siena College don't however just lie with Jeanne. As mentioned, her brother Des McKenna was an accomplished sculptor and was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in 1992 for his community work in helping establish St Francis Xavier College in Upper Beaconsfield.

Des and his brother, Fr Kevin McKenna, came to Siena College only a couple of years ago to give advice on the restoration of Mother Gonsalvo's Cross, which sits in the front garden of the College.

Another sibling, Marie (Class of 1956), pursued a career in psychology and became an associate professor and in 2014, was also awarded an Order of Australia Medal for her services to psychology as an educator and practitioner to the disadvantaged, refugees and the homeless.

All three of Marie's daughters, Sarah (Class of 1984), Catherine (Class of 1985) and Justine (Class of 1991), were educated at Siena. Justine went on to become a world champion rower and a practising psychologist.

The McKenna children were blessed with having parents who were faithful, loving and generous to their family and the wider community. During the early 1950s, James McKenna wrote words to accompany a popular song of the day, *My Truly, Truly Fair*. These words and music would become the first dedicated school song for the College and it was much loved for over thirty years. Even today, past students from the 1950s to 1970s still sing their school song with great gusto.

*Siena Convent School – nuns and pupils too,
How I love that splendid band
We've worked and played there
And we have prayed there
Long may our Siena stand*

*Some nuns here like Melbourne rain
Some like Sydney still
But I still love the convent school
That stands upon the hill.*

*Some girls here will marry men
Some will take the veil
But all will keep for the convent school
A love that will not fail*

*Whenever I look on sky or sea
Near or far from home
It's depth of blue will recall to me
Our convent's crowning dome*

The McKenna family have all contributed to their communities wherever they have been. Committed to helping others, they have lived out the Dominican tradition of community and service and found satisfaction and success in their lives. We are inspired by their contributions and proud to have them as members of our Siena community.



Redbook Photography



Celebrating Community Events

Mother's Day Breakfast, Father's Day Breakfast
and the 2017 College Production, *Guys and Dolls*



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*Connecting girls, empowering young women
Stay connected ...*



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