



st mary's women

JAN STEWART (Elliott '65) Board Director



"Take every opportunity that comes your way, knowing that as a graduate of St Mary's you will have the capacity to take on all that lies ahead."

I was immensely lucky that my mother was determined that my siblings and I would have the education she was denied as a young woman growing up in the years of the Great Depression, and registered me to sit for a scholarship to St Mary's, an advertisement for which she saw in the local paper. I remain grateful to the School for offering me that generous scholarship as my parents were in no financial position to pay the fees for such an education. I was a pupil of St Mary's from 1958 to 1965.

During my years at the School, I was taught by many gifted teachers who opened my eyes to the opportunities of all that was possible in an era when often the opportunities for young women were still limited to more traditional careers. I was given confidence in my abilities and taught a value base of service to others and to the broader community, which has been fundamental to all I have done in my life.

When I left St Mary's I enrolled at the University of Western Australia where I studied for six years. My first job was as a Social Worker at Graylands Hospital and from that position I moved to Princess Margaret Hospital where I served as Chief Social Worker from 1978 to 1985 when our older son was born. For the next three years, during which time our younger

son was born, I worked as a freelance 'consultant', serving on various boards, and doing research work and policy work before starting my first role at Lotterywest (then the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia) as a grants consultant. I was appointed to the role of Chief Executive in 1992 and served in that role until the end of 2015 when I retired. I now spend my time serving the community and arts sector on various boards and committees.

The students at St Mary's today live and work in a very different world from the one I lived in but some of the lessons I learned are timeless. The basic lesson was that you have to work hard and always do your best, but also to understand that we are all individuals, each with different talents and hopes. Disappointments come to us all at some time in our lives but we always have to remember that success comes in many guises - not only the obvious one of career success but also in being a good friend or helping those in need.

There is a big, exciting and largely unknown future waiting for you. Take every opportunity that comes your way, knowing that as a graduate of St Mary's you will have the capacity to take on all that lies ahead.

