

The WEST PERTH
BELLE

2025 REFLECTIONS





Introducing REBECCA & AMY

It is our great pleasure to introduce Rebecca Payne and Amy Dickson to you. Rebecca is our Deputy Principal and Amy has moved from the philanthropy team into the role of Alumni Coordinator.

Working closely alongside our Principal Mrs Judith Tudball, Rebecca now has additional responsibility for community engagement which includes alumni, current and past parents. Amy is an Old Girl herself leaving St Mary's in 1994 and returning as a staff member in 2022.

Both Rebecca and Amy are greatly looking forward to getting to know the West Perth Belles.

2026 Pen Pals Program

Can you remember being in Year 5 (Grade 5) at 9 turning 10 years of age? The Year 5s in 2026 will be surrounded by technology and a fast-paced classroom, so we would like to take them back in time to start a Pen Pal Program, handwriting just a few letters to our Old Girls. They need practice in letter writing, storytelling, capturing their imaginations onto paper and making new friends, even if they are a little bit older than their usual friends! We all have so much to share and learn from one generation to another, with our unique experience of being a St Mary's Girl.

Please let us know if you would like to take part in our Pen Pal Program by writing to:

Email: oga@stmarys.wa.edu.au or
Alumni Relations Coordinator,
St Mary's Anglican Girls' School
75 Elliott Road, Karrinyup WA 6018
Or phoning: (08) 9341 9107

You're Invited!

Carols by Candlelight St Mary's and Hale School

Thursday 27 November, 6–8pm
St George's Cathedral

Save The Date: St Mary's 105th Birthday Fair

Friday 6 March 2026, 4–8.30pm
St Mary's Anglican Girls' School
75 Elliott Road,
Karrinyup WA 6018
Phone:
(08) 9341 9107



WEST PERTH Morning Tea

The Old Girls' Association was delighted to welcome more than 80 Old Girls to a special morning tea at the St Mary's West Perth Parish Hall and Church to honour those who attended our former West Perth campus.

The Collin Street campus was home to St Mary's for 45 years before the School embarked on a new chapter at Karrinyup in 1966. Old Girls enjoyed the opportunity to tour the old grounds with the School Archivist, Stephanie Neille, reminisce on school days memories and reconnect with classmates who were part of this important era in St Mary's history.

A special highlight of the event was the centenary cake cutting, led by Principal, Mrs Judith Tudball and 1948 Head Girl Beth Buchanan (Mickle '48). It was especially meaningful to share this moment with Beth, who has since passed away and is remembered with great affection by the St Mary's community.



Centenary ✿ YEAR Celebrations

As the centenary of our Old Girls' Association draws to a close, we are delighted to share some of the wonderful celebrations across the generations.



Old Girls' Mother Daughter Celebration

There was a wonderful sense of connection as mothers, grandmothers and cherished mother figures from our Old Girl community came together to celebrate in May. The gathering was filled with warmth, laughter, and shared stories, creating a memorable occasion for all who attended.

The occasion was made especially meaningful by the presence of many multi-generational families, bringing together Old Girls with current and future St Mary's students in a heartfelt celebration of legacy and community.



Old Girls' Centenary Dinner & Women of Distinction Awards

The Polson Room was buzzing with connection and joy in July as we celebrated the Old Girls' Centenary Dinner alongside the Women of Distinction Awards. Held every five years, these awards recognise the remarkable achievements of our Old Girls across three categories: Career, Community and Young.

It was a truly special evening, marking 100 years of the Old Girls' Association and celebrating the exceptional accomplishments of our finalists. The evening honoured the inspiring accomplishments of our alumni and the enduring legacy of the Old Girls' Association.

On this historic occasion, we were particularly delighted to honour two extraordinary supporters of the Old Girls' Association. President of the Old Girls' Association, Amy Dawson (Fraser '94) was named an Honorary Life Member in recognition of her exceptional leadership and dedication in her tenth year as President. In appreciation of her enduring commitment and unwavering support of the Old Girls' community, Principal Mrs Judith Tudball was named an Honorary Member for Life.



We were also proud to announce the three remarkable Women of Distinction Award winners:

Career Award – Brooke Ellingworth ('95)

A global IT executive and mentor, Brooke is using her platform to empower women in technology and champion sustainability at the highest levels of business leadership.

Community Award – Linda Gouldsmith (Troughton '79)

Through her charity, Access Hope Inc., Linda is transforming the lives of orphaned and vulnerable children in Kenya, providing love, education, and a future filled with hope.

Young Award – Christine Seet ('14)

A trailblazer in politics and global development, Christine's career has taken her from the Australian Treasury to Parliament House, and now to Ghana's Ministry of Finance as an ODI Fellow.



In Memoriam

It is always with sadness we mark the passing of an Old Girl. This year we farewelled three leading lights in our community. We pay tribute to their contributions, their personalities and their talents.

Beth Buchanan

(MICKLE '48, HEAD GIRL)

Born in 1931 to a family of five, Beth worked hard to make a living in her remote town of Meekatharra. Elizabeth Ann Mickle, always known as Beth, grew up with two older brothers who boarded at Scotch College. After moving to Armadale, Beth travelled to St Mary's each day, commencing from the middle of Year 9, a difficult time to start at a school that was run down due to post-World War Two austerity. Beth's first lesson was French with Mrs Strong, a subject she had never learnt before. A very clever and sporty girl in Riley House, Beth took to St Mary's, studying accelerated Junior and Leaving Certificates. So popular and successful was she that she was elected Head Girl, a position she didn't wish to take as she thought the financial burden would be too great for her mother. Mrs Myles, a very understanding and kind Principal, convinced her of its merits, and Beth went on to enjoy her position, winning the Citizenship Prize and becoming Champion Sportswoman in 1948. Beth would always be grateful to

her parents for making the financial sacrifice to send her to St Mary's. As she would later say, "St Mary's was my life."

Always wanting to help others and with a deep Christian faith, Beth went on to study Nursing, attended Deaconess School with the Anglican Church, studied Kindergarten teaching, and was at one stage a Senior Advisor in Childcare for Community

Services. Beth married Reverend Frederick (Fred) Buchanan, who was originally from Wollongong in NSW. Living and helping in very poor parishes in Sydney, Beth and Fred had four children: Andrew, Peter, Angus and Ann. Moving back to Perth, they and their extended families would attend Christ Church Grammar School and St Mary's. Always loyal and supportive of her old school, Beth would attend reunions and events whenever possible, and always made time for charitable causes, her favourite being 'Wheelchairs for Kids', founded by Brother Olly Pickett AM. Hers was a life lived for others and devoted to her family, friends, church and beliefs. Beth was farewelled at the Chapel of St Mary, a place so close to her heart, at the wonderful age of 94.

Marlene Carter ('63)

Marlene Rae Carter was born in Meckering, a regional WA town, on 27 September 1945. She was the only child of Raymond and Albina Carter, who owned a farm that raised sheep and grew wheat. Raymond had served in the Royal Australian Air Force during the war, which was hard for the farm, but he thought service to his country was too important. Service would play a large part in Marlene's life, and she learned self-reliance and connection to the land and animals on the farm. First attending Meckering Primary School, Marlene then boarded at St Mary's from 1958 – 1962, spending her final year as a day girl in 1963. A devoted Riley House member, but not always the most diligent student, Marlene excelled in subjects that she loved and where she liked the teachers, so Economics and Geography were her strongest areas. As a boarder, she would have midnight feasts and enjoy going into the city for Saturday shopping trips and matinee movies. There were Saturday dancing lessons and Sunday church services with the Hale School boys, as well as choir singing at weddings at St Mary's West Perth Church.

Sport was Marlene's great enjoyment. She was a tennis champion, received Basketball (now known as netball) Honours, and threw javelin at the first IGSSA Athletics at Perry Lakes Stadium in 1963. She was awarded the 'Best Sportswoman' in that same year. Marlene learned and enjoyed piano and finished her school life with the Citizenship Award, an award that would be emblematic of her adult life. She would also finish school with friends for life, and an unparalleled devotion and loyalty to all things St Mary's. Caught up in Principal Theresa Macdonald's enthusiasm and fundraising efforts, Marlene spent her time



during the summer holidays after completing her Leaving exams, door-knocking and canvassing donations for the School to move from West Perth to Karrinyup in the 'A Place to Grow' campaign. Hugely successful and community-driven, this campaign inspired Marlene to believe that building programs and projects could be achieved if everyone could pull together and contribute. Even if people didn't have money to spare, they could donate in kind or time, as farmers donated hay bales and sheep or produce to be auctioned. As Marlene explained, "it was a wonder to watch."

Marlene attended Edwards Business College and went on to work in many areas of administration in London, various departments at the University of WA, for business development organisations and for politicians.

Always a member of the Old Girls' Association (OGA), Marlene attended her first OGA Committee Meeting with a friend in 1984 and was a Committee Member by 1985. By 1989, her business acumen and experience were recognised and put to good use when she became the OGA Representative on the Board of Management of the Foundation.

Of all Marlene's accolades and contributions to St Mary's, the one that was so meaningful for her was the naming of the Marlene Carter Heritage Centre in 2015. With its establishment, the heritage, traditions and history of the School would be carried out in perpetuity, with accuracy at museum standard and incorporating curriculum involvement. Marlene dearly wanted the current students to know and understand where their school had come from and just how lucky they were to be here. As Marlene said, and would wish all St Mary's girls to say, "I am proud to say I went to St Mary's".

Valma Cearns

(DAVIES '51)

Valma Sylvia Davies was born in 1933 in Collie, south of Perth. She became a resident of our boarding house in 1946, which, at the time, was located at 22 Kingsway, Nedlands, and was personally managed by the then-Principal, Mrs Elizabeth Myles (1944-1956). Valma was happy and progressing academically when she was struck by polio at age 15. Doctors predicted that she would not live, but without an available iron lung, she survived by pure determination. She always remembered the nurse's advice at the time, "you've got to make the best of the present." Returning to school with permanent disabilities, and using crutches and callipers, Valma completed her Leaving Certificate with flying colours. Mrs Myles employed guidance counsellors at the School, and although wanting to become a teacher, Valma was encouraged to study law. The Law School at UWA, initially reluctant to accept a student with disabilities, was convinced by Mrs Myles to give Valma the opportunity. Carried up and down stairs by fellow law students, Valma was only one of two women in her year at UWA to graduate with a law degree.

Despite the physical challenges that would beset her, Valma married Ian at St Mary's West Perth Church and had three children: Howard, Michael and Rebecca. Supporting her husband, who was himself a prominent lawyer, she would rise to become a Senior Partner in a law firm, an exceptional achievement for a woman at that time, and went on to serve the legal profession with distinction. Working at the Citizens' Advice Bureau and specialising in family law, Valma was also appointed as the Inaugural Chair of the Case Review Board and continued as Chair of the Case Review Panel at the Department of Community Services for many years. She was also the Chair of the Kalparrin Centre, which supports children with developmental needs, and was a member of the Access and Inclusion Committee for the Brightwater Care Group.

A regular at every Old Girl event, Valma never missed an opportunity to support the School and catch up with old friends. Full of boundless energy and a will to enjoy life, not just for herself, but for those unable to participate fully in the community, Valma was farewelled at the age of 92. Extended family, friends, colleagues, represented organisations, and members of the St Mary's community gathered at the Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club, watching the glistening Swan River in the afternoon sun, as excerpts from Valma's school oral history were recalled to those present, with many tears and much laughter being heard.



Life's Duty Done

We express our sincere condolences to the family and friends of the following members of our St Mary's community who passed away this year:

Elizabeth Barrett ('98)
Boyd Craig
(grandson of Leslie and Frances Craig MBE)
Angela Don ('64)
Tracey Emery ('07)
Glenys Hubery (Kemshall '57)
Melissa Langton (Duggan '93)
Pamela Leiper (Biggs '55, Head Girl)
Valma McLean (Fallon '49)



Yvonne's latest milestone

It is an honour to recognise Yvonne Abbott (Lawrence '46), who recently turned 96, as our oldest Old Girl. Yvonne continues to inspire us all with her spirit and enduring connection to St Mary's.

She still proudly wears her school badge on her jacket! Yvonne celebrated with her family including her daughter Robyn Abbott ('77), who is also an Old Girl.



New Science Centre Underway

Science has always been an important part of learning at St Mary's, inspiring generations of students to explore and innovate. Our new Science, Enterprise, Technology and Innovation (SETI) Centre is a crucial step in continuing to provide our students with the resources and learning environment they need to excel.

Following the demolition of the former Maths building, the original Junior School, in late 2024, groundwork preparations have been underway over the last few months, and we received development approval in August. Our groundbreaking ceremony was held on 26 September and construction is now underway. We expect classes to start in the new building from late 2027.

With a design focus on sustainability, the Centre will feature four technology laboratories and 17 specialist laboratories, including chemistry, biology, marine science,

environmental science, engineering, a purpose-built marine science tank room, dedicated sustainability labs, and an edible-garden space. At the heart of the building will be a multi-level amphitheatre, providing a versatile environment for learning and collaboration.

Science has long held a special place at St Mary's, and this new facility will honour that proud legacy while boldly propelling us into the future. From its earliest roots in the 1920s to today, our dedication to Science Technology Engineering Mathematics learning continues to evolve and flourish. We are proud of the Old Girls who have forged remarkable careers in science and technology-related fields, making a positive impact on society through their contributions.

We look forward to sharing more updates as this incredible new building takes shape.



To learn more about how you can be involved in bringing the SETI Centre to life, please scan the QR code.



The West Perth Belle is published annually for St Mary's Old Girls who attended St Mary's in Colin Street, West Perth. We welcome your comments and suggestions on the content to ensure this newsletter is of interest to you.

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