

**Mrs Veronica Ghidella, Parent and former member of the Teaching Staff: (written in 2021)**

## THE BEGINNINGS OF TRINITY COLLEGE

What were some of the happiest days of your life – the days when you knew you were truly blessed? There are many contenders – the day you met your spouse, the days your children were born, the day you bought your first home..... And definitely, for some of us, the day Catholic Education decided to site Trinity College in Beenleigh.

As our eldest child approached the end of her Primary schooling, we were facing the dilemma of where to send her for her Secondary education. The nearest options were MacKillop at Mt Gravatt or Star of the Sea, at Southport – neither ideal, distance wise. Then there seemed a miracle might happen as we heard Catholic Education was considering a new co-ed High School for either Beenleigh or Daisy Hill – and it would be established in time for our daughter to begin High School, in 1982.

Many anxious months ensued as local parents attended meetings held in St Patrick's Church, putting forward why their Parish should be the chosen site. I believe what "won it" for Beenleigh was the Railway. This allowed easy access for students from areas to the west – Woodridge, Kingston, Loganlea, Bethania, Edens Landing – and we were closer to Beaudesert from where students could more easily be bussed to the new Trinity College.

But we have also to credit the enthusiasm of the many parents who prayed for and supported the establishment of the new college. These parents, along with the Marist Brothers, became like second family as the new school came into being; to grow to the wonderful Alma Mater it is today, for so many. Some of these enthusiastic supporters whom I remember (and apologies to those I leave out) were the Doyles, Mulherans, Jardines, Kidds, McGoverns, Williamsons, Makarez, Gerdings, Whites.

And it was a unique and wonderful experience for our children. I'm sure those Foundation Students remember the day the School opened in 1982 – or rather, should have opened. They were there in their crisp new uniforms, many accompanied by parents, for their first day at Trinity College. But the weather had different plans! After days of torrential rain, the school grounds (which were still a construction site) were not safe. So, after the Official Ceremonies, they all went home for an additional week's "holiday" so the grounds could dry out and access to the buildings be made safe.

For me, the Tuck Shop Roster and Mothers' Club fostered wonderful friendships and happy times. Fleuri Doyle became the foundation President of the Mothers' Club and I was privileged to be its Secretary/Treasurer. For many of us it was just a lot of fun as we planned fund raising events – Morning Teas, Melbourne Cup Lunches, cooking lessons in the Home Economics kitchen, to teach us how to use that new-fangled appliance – the Microwave Oven! When our fund-raising efforts purchased, for the College, its first piano, this was an opportunity again for a Morning Tea where the students could "show off" their musical prowess. And the annual Windaroo Fun Run was an example of the wider community's involvement with the College, especially that of the Heck Family.

I must also acknowledge the wonderful friendship we enjoyed with the Marist staff - especially Br John Mullins who remained a close friend till his death in 2012; and Br Jeffrey Barrington. Br John was certainly a students' Principal and could be seen out in the grounds talking to and interacting with students every day, before and after school.

I find it difficult to believe all this started 40 years ago, but I do know what an asset Trinity College has been to Beenleigh and district. And I will be forever thankful that our children were introduced to those Marist Brothers who brought with them the Marist Virtues of Humility, Simplicity and Modesty. The seed was planted!

Veronica Ghidella