

It was with great sadness that I learned of the passing of Brother John Mullins on 12 November 2012, more than 30 years after our first meeting in late 1981. Then, I was a 12-year-old primary school student, and Brother John was to be my first high school Principal at a brand new school, Trinity College Beenleigh, opening its doors the following year. My first impressions were of a kind, interested and interesting man; a man who listened, and heard.... even to a little 12 year old feeling a bit overwhelmed by the prospect of entering high school and the 'brave new world' ahead!

In one of life's many serendipities, Brother John was no stranger to our family. In what must have been one of his earliest (if not first) teaching positions, he had taught Latin to my father, Elso, at Marist Brothers Innisfail, North Queensland in around 1956. Surely neither of them imagined, then, that a future sugar cane farmer's future children would be Brother John's future students some 25 years later!

For 5 years, from 1982 to 1986, Brother John taught, mentored, guided, watched-over, listened and heard hundreds of students like me, as he built Trinity College into the fine high school that I remember. I was privileged to have been educated by an intelligent, thoughtful, reflective man who lead by example, who tempered firmness with fairness, who genuinely cared for his young charges and who wanted us all to realize our full potential not only as students but as human beings.

Brother John was present, he was with us, he cared. I remember him, every day, in the playground, in the carpark with kids and parents at the end of the school day. He was there because he believed in his calling; he believed that to influence for the good, he must be a genuine part of the lives of the young people he taught.

Brother John was not only influential for me personally and as a student but was also an important part of my family. He visited our family home on many occasions and shared meals with us, even many years after I and both my younger brothers, David and Bruce, had left Trinity. He was present for many of the important occasions in our family life, including the funeral of his former Latin student, my own dear Dad, in 2004. He remained a great friend and support to my mother, Veronica, with visits and Christmas cards.

Brother John Mullins was a hugely significant and positive influence in my life and that of my family and, I am quite sure, in the lives of the many thousands of students, parents, colleagues, teachers and friends that he touched with his humble heart. I feel incredibly privileged to have been taught by him and blessed that a life so well-lived, orbited close to mine. I am ever grateful to him for the world of possibility he opened for me.

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather, teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

— Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Katharine Ghidella, a founding student and Trinity
College School Captain 1986