



St MARY'S

Diocesan School for Girls, Kloof

OLD GIRLS' GUILD

• 2020 NEWSLETTER • Issue 2 •

The year that is 2020

DEAR Fellow Old Girls,

The COVID-19 pandemic and the wall-to-wall media coverage associated with it has changed many of our lives.

For many, the pandemic has allowed for a time of reflection and the forced slower pace of life has enabled families to spend quality time together. Things previously taken for granted, like a coffee date with a friend or a hug from older parents have become the things we miss and appreciate the most. As a result of the virus we have seen new forms of heroism emerging - front line health workers, cashiers, essential service workers and teachers.

It would be remiss of me not to congratulate the entire staff, under the leadership of Mr Manley, for the professional and caring way they have guided the girls of St Mary's through these uncharted waters during these unprecedented times.

The online platform offered to the girls during the period when the schools were closed facilitated the outstanding educational experience that is synonymous with St Mary's.

The staggered return of girls to school, in line with the government regulations has been very successful. All measures have been taken to ensure St Mary's girls are in a safe environment.

Tears came to my eyes when I dropped our youngest daughter, Josephine, at school on her first day back. Clad in masks, with music playing, the Head and Deputy Head of the Senior Primary, Ms Tracy Laubscher and Mrs *Cheryl Reddy nee Archary (1995)* welcomed each girl into a new environment - an environment filled with

masks, social distancing, hand sanitising and lots of new rules and routines.

However, true to St Mary's, the day was filled with lots of virtual hugs, reassurance and fun, despite the challenging environment. You could see the girls' eyes smiling, behind their masks! It is this spirit of St Mary's - to be world class and to inspire young women, irrespective of the situation at hand - that makes me so proud to be a St Mary's Old Girl.

Being restricted and isolated initially presented us with huge social challenges but has also reminded us of the gift of freedom. Most humans thrive on human interaction - social gatherings, freedom to travel and spend time in nature and enjoy the traditional braai with friends.

Up until now, this has been prohibited. The Level 2 lockdown announced by our President on Saturday, 15 August, means our world is slowly opening up again.

We are currently working on plans for our virtual Old Girls' Day and as we gain a clearer understanding of what is allowed under Level 2 lockdown, we will keep you updated with revised plans.

It is my hope and prayer that that we never forget what this pandemic, that is blind to cultural and ideological differences, has taught us.

Stay safe, Old Girls, and enjoy the read!

Kind regards

Bianca

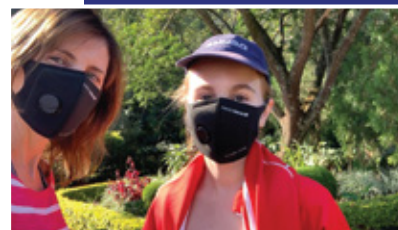
Bianca Livesey nee Crouse (1995) -

Chairlady of the St Mary's Old Girls' Guild



TRANSFORMATION AND DIVERSITY

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INSPIRING OLD GIRLS

Featured throughout



OLD GIRL NEWS

Featured throughout

Please put forward your nominations for inspiring Old Girls.
We wish to recognise special achievements of our girls across the years
and oceans and we would love to hear from you!
Please contact Lauren at lrapsen@stmarysds.co.za

Transformation and Diversity at St Mary's

Khanyisile Thusi (Head Girl 2011)

- Head of the St Mary's Transformation & Diversity Task Team

As a St Mary's Old Girl, I feel connected to the cause of ensuring that the mistakes of the past are not repeated in current and future generations. St Mary's is more than a place for girls to get an education, it forms a part of the foundation that girls create for who they are and who they want to become.

It was with that in mind that I decided to join the *Transformation and Diversity Task Team*. I want to ensure that no person leaves the school ashamed, or uncertain of who they are. I want to be a part of the process of telling girls who have ever been discriminated against that they are valid and that they never have to change or make themselves smaller in order to be accepted.

St Mary's has the future in its hands which means that it has a responsibility to foster an environment that includes and empowers everyone. It has a duty to dismantle systems of power that ostracise and discriminate against anyone for being themselves and I want to be a part of making sure that duty is fulfilled.

If there are any Old Girls who would like to get involved, please do not hesitate to contact the school via email at transformation@stmarysdsg.co.za



In 2019, Truworthis launched a new CSI initiative called *Respect Her*, pledging R100 000 towards the fight against gender-based violence. Through the initiative, Truworthis has supported *The House Group*, *The Pink Ladies*, *Rape Crisis* and *The Social Makeover* organisations.

For August, Women's Month, Truworthis Fashion has collaborated with three artists to capture the complexity, the reality, the beauty of being a woman. Featured left is the artwork of painter and illustrator, *Victoria Verbaan (1996)*.

"Painting and illustrating has always played a significant role in my life," says Victoria, "it's my medium of communication. It forces me to observe and absorb everything that is interesting and it keeps me moving forward with a sense of freedom in this omnivorous cultural whirlwind where visual stimuli often engulf us. I wanted the painting to reflect strength yet still be feminine. I celebrate women through my work with an emphasis on beauty and power - my girls are surreal, dreamy, fiercely optimistic and enthusiastic."

Courtesy of @TruworthisFashion - Instagram

Foundation News

St Mary's Foundation Trust **KALEIDOSCOPE RELIEF FUND**

Showing Kindness - Giving Hope



The St Mary's Foundation Trust wants to show kindness and give hope to our St Mary's family. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent national lockdown are expected to be far reaching – whilst we can't always impact South Africa or the world as a whole, we can help those closest to us. We understand the economic pressure expected for many families to be catastrophic and we want to give those that can help, the opportunity to do so.

The purpose of the Kaleidoscope Relief Fund is to help St Mary's families keep their daughters at St Mary's during these uncertain times. Any donation towards this fund, will go towards helping a current St Mary's girl. The St Mary's Foundation Trust is a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO No. 930 036 672), therefore all donations are tax deductible and Section 18A tax certificates are issuable. Once-off donations or small ongoing monthly donations are welcomed. Collectively we can have a great impact – every donation counts! Please contact Bronwyn Cawood on bcawood@stmarysg.co.za for more information.

Kaleidoscope Colour Walk

We are delighted to announce that we raised just over R25 000 from our Kaleidoscope Colour Walk! It was such a fun, colourful morning and we were delighted to see Old Girls, who are currently parents at St Mary's, as well as around SA and abroad participating with their families!

Thank you for showing kindness and giving hope to our St Mary's families in need. We truly are #StrongerTogether.

Business Classifieds

We recently launched our St Mary's Business Classifieds 2020, where

we hoped to encourage the school's community to support local and St Mary's linked businesses. Our ambition is to make a difference close to home as a way to help our community and families within our school. We are thrilled we could showcase many Old Girl businesses in this directory too. The Business Classifieds 2020 can be found on the St Mary's DSG, Kloof website (www.stmarysg.co.za) – click on the Business Directory tab at the top. All donations received have gone directly to the Kaleidoscope Relief Fund.

Grace turns 4!

It has been four years this August since Statue Grace was unveiled. Her creation was motivated and commissioned by the girls themselves and is a guiding light leaving a legacy for future generations. Just as butterflies transition from one stage to another, so Grace is a symbol of transformation.

Become part of the history of the school and contribute to future girls who will be supported by the St Mary's Foundation Trust – a way to truly leave a legacy and create a future.

With a donation of R1000, your name and Matric year will be engraved on a plaque, creating a memory which you can return to for many years to come.

You can Zapper now (see right) or if you have any queries regarding the St Mary's Foundation Trust initiatives, or for other payment options, please contact Bronwyn Cawood on bcawood@stmarysg.co.za



CONGRATULATIONS to *Norma Young (1999)* for recently publishing her book titled *We Need More Tables* in May this year. This insightful book provides readers with realistic and practical ways of moving towards eradicating poverty in South Africa, and it could not have come at a more appropriate and pertinent time in our country.

Review courtesy of Google Books:

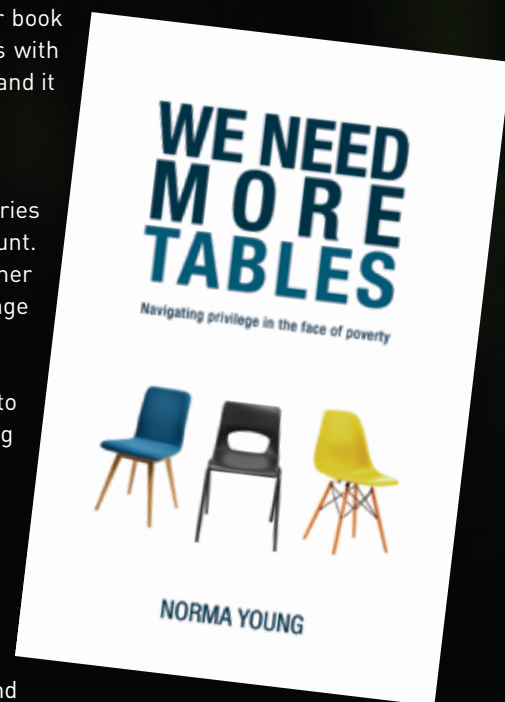
"Poverty isn't always a jumble of appalling statistics. Sometimes there are names, faces and stories to the numbers. It's a cousin who's finished high school but doesn't have enough money to job hunt. It's a colleague whose hand to mouth living still only gets her through half the month because her salary is just not enough. It's a grandfather who worked for decades and got a retirement package so paltry he can't pay his monthly bills.

When people you know and love are behind the data of impoverishment, it can be hard to determine how to help. It can be even harder to settle on how much to help without compromising on your own quality of life.

In *We Need More Tables*, Norma provides guidance on how to find a balance between alleviating poverty and yet maintaining a measure of the privilege one may have been born with. By exploring assumptions such as the myth of hard work and the fallacy of meritocracy, as well as historical methodologies of philanthropy in Africa, and

suggesting the practice of impactful altruism – such as paying a living wage, building a solidarity economy or choosing regenerative investing – she shares an outline of how those with privilege can play a role in social justice.

Drawing on indigenous knowledge – fables, proverbs and learnings from African academics – *We Need More Tables* presents a framework of what is required to bring more of our communities to participate at the tables where decisions are made.



"The thought of my own book in the school library is so surreal! I must have spent hundreds of hours in that place. When I was in Primary School, I finished many of the age appropriate books by about Std 4. So I started sneaking into the High School section under the guise of looking for books in the reference section. I knew I couldn't take books out, so I'd literally read books curled up in a corner somewhere. Then I would slide in a piece of paper as my bookmark and return it to the shelf. I have visceral recollections of being gutted whenever I'd try resume my book and get to the shelf and someone had taken it out! Needless to say, by the time I was in High School and free to take out any book I pleased, I couldn't have been happier!" - Norma Young



Congratulations to *Georgie Passalaris (1993)* on her new role as the Impact Measurement & Management Lead at the World Economic Forum (WEF). Georgie will be working for the Platform for Global Public Goods, which drives WEF's activities concerning the environment, natural resources, food security, development finance and sustainable development.

Based in Singapore for almost a decade, Georgie has since moved to Geneva where she will drive the impact measurement and management of WEF's programmes that run in support of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Agreement climate targets.

Earlier this year, Georgie worked on the development and launch of Lionapur, a non-toxic sanitisation formula designed to kill airborne and surface pathogens including coronavirus. At WEF, she will be working with colleagues and partners on issues ranging from batteries, to biodiversity and ocean plastics.

"At this critical and turbulent time, the challenge is significant and one I do not underestimate," she says, "I look forward to sharing more!"

And we look forward to hearing it, Georgie, wishing you all the best in your new role!

Image courtesy of WEF

YouTuber, Radio Presenter and second year Law Student at the University of Cape Town. *Kirsti Leaf (Head Girl 2018)* has recently joined UCT Radio as a chat show host with fellow UCT student, Savannah Thomson. Visit: www.radio.uct.ac.za/live on Fridays, 16:00-18:00 to tune in.



Congratulations to *Lee Cackett (2011)* for graduating from University of Cape Town with a PhD in Molecular and Cellular Biology in March this year. Lee's PhD research focused on understanding the genetic response of plants when exposed to salt stress (an abiotic stress linked with drought). Also in March, Lee started a job as a post-doctoral research associate in the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Cambridge. She is working to improve the genetic understanding of photosynthesis in rice and maize plants in the hope of being able to use this information to improve growth and yield for future food security.

Unfortunately due to COVID-19, she was not able to attend her graduation ceremony. Pictured above is Lee as well as a shot of her new office in Cambridge.





Lucy Lane nee Hind (1999) went on to study Drama and Psychology at Rhodes University. After graduating she moved to the UK to join her family where she met her husband and began her career in Theatre and TV as Choreographer and Movement Director. 16 years later, lots of hard work and working many shifts in plenty of bars and restaurants, Lucy now works across many UK theatres, including the National Theatre and on the West End. She has worked for the Royal Shakespeare Company, Shakespeare's Globe; with Sting, Mark Knopfler of Dire Straits and most recently had the life-long dream of transferring a show to Broadway. *Girl From the North Country* is a musical using Bob Dylan's music and written and directed by acclaimed playwright Conor McPherson. It was a most exhilarating experience and although difficult to be away from family it was well worth the hard work. Lucy also works regularly for the BBC and Cbeebies and lives in the North of England in a little village with her husband and young son, David. They have chickens and she loves the contrast of the quiet countryside to the bright lights of Broadway.

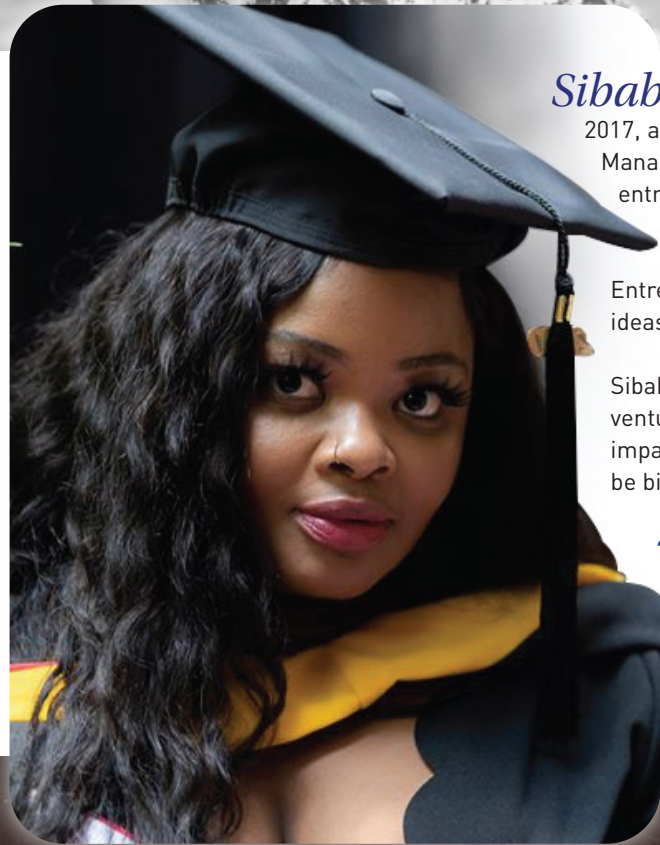
Photo credit: Rob Booker / Sainou Talent Agency London

Sibabalwe Mona (2010) graduated with an MA in International Affairs in 2017, and an MS in Non-Profit Management in 2020, both from the Milano School of Policy, Management and Environment at The New School in NYC. Sibabalwe's major was social entrepreneurship, and her academic focus was catalysing large-scale African socio-economic development through growing Africa's share of global emerging economies. She was part of the inaugural class of The New School's Impact Entrepreneurship Fellowship, and is very proud of her cohorts and the incredible impact ideas they have incubated over the last two years.

Sibabalwe will be returning to SA this year to officially house and establish her new venture nuAfrica, an economic development consulting firm at the intersection of social impact and sustainable business models. It is a global concept for Africa and she will likely be bi-continental, between Africa and USA for the foreseeable future.

"I'm a systems change strategist and a story teller," she says, "and I can't wait to start small revolutions everywhere. Thank you for all the support and well wishes in my academic journey and in the journey I am embarking on as a change maker for Africa."

Congratulations Sibabalwe!



Hannah McLean-Leonard (2016) has been named as one of two 2020-21 Cowgirl Team Captains at the University of Wyoming, Swimming team!



HANNAH MCLEAN-LEONARD

2020-21 CAPTAINS



Camilla Wolfson (2010) stars as Mia in the movie *The Kissing Booth 2* which has been airing on Netflix since the end of July. Camilla is a model and actress, and has also appeared in *Action Point* (2018) and *Order of the Dragon* (2018).



Melanie Beyeler nee Gitsham (2008), married Patrick on 25 July 2020 at a small garden wedding ceremony at Willow Way Manor, owned by the Kilfoil family (*Jessica Kilfoil 2008*) which was a blessing amidst all the COVID-19 upset this year.

One of Melanie's bridesmaids (left) was *Sarah Cronje (also 2008)*.

Jennifer Maxwell nee Hoole (1979) visited our Archives ladies (pre-lockdown) earlier this year. Given how much has happened since March, this was quite a special visit as it was the last get-together that *Pat Olivier (Honorary Old Girl)* and *Vicki Marnoch nee Wheelwright (1970)* have been able to hold at the Old Girls' Archives



Thalia Pillay (2014), software developer at Investec, features in a recent campaign on LinkedIn for the Investec Technology Graduate Programme. Thalia is a Mechatronics Engineer who has a keen interest in developing assistive technologies for South Africa. One of her past projects included developing a pair of gloves which translate South African Sign Language into spoken English! Check out the video here on <https://bit.ly/3iDOlyl>

Claire Brayshay (2008) married Luke Riding in Australia on 9 April 2020. It was a unique occasion as, rather than postpone their nuptials, the two held a virtual wedding due to the worldwide lockdown brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. This allowed loved ones around the world to join in.

"It really has proved to be a testimony to many people in a challenging time," said Claire. Claire and Luke live in Sydney and if you wish to view the occasion visit: <https://bit.ly/3l0F5LS>





Congratulations to *Lauren Forsyth (2018)* for being recognised at the 2019-20 Banquet Awards for Northern State University in South Dakota, USA in April.

Lauren was recognised for her 3.5 or higher GPA, "Swift Swim" as well as Freshman of the Year! She currently swims for the NSU Wolves and is studying Environmental Science.

Courtesy: NSU Wolves Instagram

Courtney Fyvie (2019)

has joined the Gardner-Webb University in North Carolina, USA. As a CPOA (College Prospects of America) student-athlete, Courtney will be able to pursue her tennis on a world-class level, whilst majoring in Marketing.

We wish you all the best, Courtney!



Courtesy: CPOA Facebook page

Kerry McKee nee Weddell (1999) and husband, Nyle welcomed twin daughters, Harper Emily and Sophie Isabella, on 6 May 2020.



Jacqui Brinckmann nee Woodroffe (2007) married Hugh on 4 January 2020. They travelled from Australia to celebrate with family and friends in South Africa, many of whom were Old Girls. Jacqui's Maid of Honour was, on her right, *Kerstin Plumari nee Scarlach (2007)*



Tanya Steynberg nee Bosman (2007) and husband, Shaun, welcomed their son, Connor on 8 March 2020 shortly before lockdown.

Litsoanelo Dee Seturumane (2010) welcomed son, Zion on 10 March 2020.



OBITUARIES

Valerie Lupton-Smith nee Moores (Head Girl 1954)

1936 - 2020

Valerie passed away on Tuesday 8 April 2020. Valerie was Head of Chapel in 1953 and Head Girl in 1954. She spent many of her earlier years playing tennis at the Kloof Tennis Club, before moving to the Cape. Valerie enjoyed visiting St Mary's on a number of occasions, including Old Girls' Days and teas.

"A mother of six and grandmother to eleven, she was well known in the Kloof Community and had many friends there. She was an avid sports fan and spent many of her earlier years playing tennis at the Kloof Tennis Club. A member of St Agnes Church, she assisted with the soup kitchen for a number of years. Mum loved her animals and used to love swimming which had been her daily exercise in younger years. Many will remember her for her kind, friendly and caring nature!

She will be dearly missed by many, however she is in a good place now resting peacefully with the Lord."

- edited words by Valerie Robinson (daughter)



Gillian Van Der Heijden nee Carter (1954) 1934 - 2020

Gillian would have been in the Class of 1954 although, due to ill health, she could not matriculate at St Mary's and was recommended for private tutoring.

"Algebra was not one of my problems" Gillian shared with us in 2019, "but I feared geometry, could lap up History and Geography as well as English and Art; won third Prize for a water colour the School entered in the Kloof Art Festival. It was a view from the Art Class window second floor up, of Kloof hills."

"Destiny made me

an educator... from the directorship end to educating those denied education during the struggle period 1976 - 2001. I was the first to open an Independent School in the City Centre of Johannesburg and Durban and be granted Registration by Sam de Beer, Minister of Education."

In 2001 Gillian retired and closed the two registered schools. She was married in London in 1974 to a business man from Rotterdam and widowed in 2006.

Retirement did not stop Gillian and in 2012 she became the oldest graduate at the University of KwaZulu-Natal attaining a Masters Degree in English at 78 years old!

She then went onto Media and Communication, achieving a B.Sc. Honours degree in Media and Society Film study in 2013 and in 2016 was awarded her second Master of Arts Degree In Philosophy, Religion and late Classical Civilization.

Quoted from UKZN online: "Her thirst for knowledge seems unquenchable... Asked if her age was a hindering factor in her studies, Van Der Heijden boisterously said: 'The challenge was to beat the digital divide and overcome new technology. But if England's Queen Elizabeth can still mount her horse - and she does - then obviously we old girls can do it if we try!'"

Gillian's time at the school was remembered with fondness and, even up until late 2019, she would attend the annual Golden Old Girls' Teas at the school, the 2019 event being the opening of the new Archives location.

