

BENEFACTORS OVER THE YEARS

Over the years the School has been fortunate to receive generous donations from past students. This generosity is reflected in the building projects that have taken place and also in the awarding of scholarships and Speech Night prizes.

In the period 1888-1914 the past students were financially very supportive of the School. The Old Boys' Union had their own club house in the city as well as running a successful cricket club. This association also published the School Magazine twice a year and organized fund raising events to support scholarships to worthy students. After Cyclone Leonta in 1903 the union raised a good sum of money that was used to help rebuild what is now known as School House.

WWI had a marked effect on the School and the Old Boy's Union. Due to economic and social factors the Union disbanded and many past students who served overseas did not return to Townsville. Financial support given to the School between the two world wars came from individuals such as Sir John McKelvey, our first past student to be knighted, and W.S. Boyd who became a world renowned geologist working in the United States. Another prominent supporter was Dr W.H. Donald, son of a long standing secretary to the Board of Trustees, who in 1930 sponsored the prize now awarded to our best all round girl. Major prizes in Mathematics and Biological Science at Year 11 and Year 12 are named after W.H. Donald.

After WWII, the first serious attempt at fund raising was an appeal in the early 1960s by Maurie Blank, the then Headmaster, to raise money to build the School pool. With financial support from the teaching staff, parents and students and the J.S. Love Estate the full sum of \$65,000 to build the pool was raised. Mr F.H. Brazier, a Trustee from 1954-1973, donated all the engineering costs towards the project.

Launched at a gala dinner on 9 August, 1968, Project Phoenix became the most ambitious fundraising event then undertaken by the School. At the dinner, the Chairman of the Board, Ian Roberts, outlined the details which the Board hoped would culminate in the erection of a Science building, a new library and administration block and a language centre. The prime object was to raise \$75,000 in five years, this sum being supplemented by government support. Within three months the sum of \$61,700 had been raised. Much of the money was raised from donations by local businesses, current parents and past students who lived in rural areas. The initial cost of the Science block was \$192,712 but with support of a commonwealth grant of \$147,700 from the then Minister for Education, Malcolm Fraser, the block could be built without the School incurring a debt.

With the approach of the centenary in 1988 the Hopkins family became the first major benefactor in the School's history. A generous sum of money was donated and the English Department building was named the Spenser Hopkins Building in honour of a man who has the longest association with the School. Spenser was one of the initial twenty-three students who enrolled in 1888 and in 1921 he became a Trustee of the School. He was to remain on the Board of Trustees until 1966 acting as Chairman from 1928-1940 and 1953-1960.

Roy Philip Rheuben [1911-1915] became the next major benefactor donating over US\$100,000 to the School. Rheuben was a state scholar and a good all-round student while at Grammar. He won various academic awards, dominated field events in athletics and took part in many school productions. After serving in WWI, Rheuben became a dentist before moving to the United States where he practiced in the state of Nevada. He always kept in close touch with the School and, on his passing, left part of his estate to Grammar. His donation was used to totally re-furbish the rooms in the Science block which is now named after him. The Year 12 Physics and Chemistry prizes are also named in honour of Rheuben.

Two past students who both attended the School in the late 1930s have in recent years donated significant funds to the School. In 2001, Laurence Edward Wilkins [Joe] donated the funds for the Wilkins Bursary. Wilkins, whose mother was the youngest daughter of Robert Hayles, the force behind the ferries to Magnetic Island, had a great respect for Mr Rowland [his Headmaster] and Mr Blank who was later to be Headmaster at the School. Wilkins loved to relate the story of the time he had to see Mr Blank about a school matter and was caught up with a group who were being punished for various misdemeanours. In spite of protesting his innocence Wilkins was caned by Mr Blank who said it "was better to punish the innocent than to let the guilty go free!"

Another student who had an enormous respect for Mr Rowland is Edna Shaw [1938] who still refers to Mr Rowland as "Boss". Miss Shaw, currently patron of the Past Grammarians' Association has been a most generous donor: her love of art is reflected in the naming of the Ceramics Centre in her honour and every annual Art Prize from Year 8 to Year 12 has been sponsored in her name. Miss Shaw has also presented over 4,000 art books to James Cook University, many of them first edition or limited edition copies.

The School has indeed been most fortunate to have such generous benefactors over the years. It is to be hoped that in future years more past students will be just as generous in their support of the School.

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