

**AILS A MACKINNON COMMUNITY CENTRE**  
**FEBRUARY 17 2017**

When I first heard that a building at OLMC was going to bear my name I felt overwhelmed. Who am I that such an honour be given to me! Only yesterday I was reading one of Catherine McAuley's sayings. It said – we should never seek reward for our service or recognition for our accomplishments. Let our joy be in knowing that we have given our all without any reserve. When I think back on my days at OLMC I can say that I have tried to give 'my all' and I hope, without seeking reward or recognition.

At the same time I am grateful that this building bears my name. I know that this is not about me but is a recognition of the many Sisters of Mercy who have ministered at OLMC over many years, and I happen to be the last. This practice is a meaningful way of keeping the heritage of the Sisters alive in the school community.

I have the fondest of memories of my time at OLMC. It was very demanding and full of challenges. It was also a time of joy and satisfaction for I had a sense that I was making a difference.

The most enduring memories I have are associated with how students and staff related with each other. I got the sense that OLMC was one large community and everyone felt 'at home'. I can tell many stories (but I won't), of the care staff showed to students, students to staff, staff to staff and student to student. This atmosphere doesn't just happen. It has to be worked at with a lot of encouragement.

I remember asking one student what her favourite room in the school was. I was expecting her to say the room where she learnt her best liked subject, or idealistically, the Chapel. But no, she said – the hall. When I asked her why - she gave this answer – that's where the whole school comes together as a community. We hear about each other's activities, what's happening in sport, in subject areas and we learn things we don't learn in class. And we get to know each other and have fun. We have dances and liturgies in the hall. Finally, she reluctantly said –and that's where we do our exams.

The Edith Angel Hall has outgrown its usefulness in terms of space and now there is this most beautiful building where these same community activities can happen. Adding the title Centre to the word Community adds another dimension, implying that community is at the heart of OLMC. And that's wonderful to know and to experience.

One of my great interests during my time at OLMC was to experience the girls' engagement in sport. Mind you, sport always has and always will interest me. Netball, tennis, athletics and swimming have been sports in which OLMC has been engaged for a long time. During my time, the list expanded – cricket, soccer, touch, dance, European handball, water polo, basketball, golf, hockey, volleyball, to name a few. In line with the OLMC philosophy, students are encouraged to try many things and see how they go and sport gives ample opportunity for that. I think this philosophy is picked up well in the saying on the outer wall of the building facing Victoria Road – Expanding Beyond What We Know We Can Be.

One boast in the sporting arena is, of course, Amanda Farrugia. Amanda, exstudent and teacher is a member of the inaugural Greater Western Sydney AFL team and captained the first game. Congratulations Amanda!

Involvement in sport, too, goes a long way to building community. Learning how to work together, how to take success and failure as part of the whole, how to hone your skills, how to test your endurance, your resilience, are all qualities which help a young woman to learn how to be a good member of the community.

This is a beautiful building. It is yet another fine example of a community working together. The Board, ably led by Kerrie Walshaw; Principal, Stephen Walsh and staff (particularly the PE Staff) have done a wonderful job in engaging quality architects and builders to achieve this task. My heartiest congratulations to you. You deserve to be rightly proud of this latest addition to the OLMC plant.

May staff, students, parents and the wider community enjoy many years of community experiences in this place.