

# DHSESA - Newsletter

Number 19

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DANDENONG HIGH SCHOOL EX-STUDENTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## ...“AN EXTREMELY SPECIAL DAY”

**WITH MUSIC, DRAMA, AND GYMNASTICS, THE NEW EDNA DAWSON-VUKMIROVIC CENTRE WAS OPENED AT THE SCHOOL ON AUGUST 27<sup>TH</sup> 1998.**

In his speech of welcome, the school Principal, Mr Bruce van den Berg observed, “Today is an extremely special day in the life of Dandenong High School. We waited a long time to get it”. Before a packed gymnasium, consisting of the entire, perfectly behaved student body, and a large number of interested visitors, special guests, including Stana Sargood (Vukmirovic), School Council President, Christine Ware, and student representatives, formally and warmly gave life to a desperately sought edifice. A review of the recent history of this new centre shows that the proposed gymnasium/ Performing Arts Centre was officially launched almost exactly 2 years prior to the opening. From that point, the school provided an initial grant,

some of those funds having been collected over many years. Soon after, a Co-operative was launched, further donations were obtained, and the cost, being just under \$1,000,000, was achieved. The day was opened by the singing, (with gusto), of the school song.



### **STANA SARGOOD (VUKMIROVIC)**

It seemed appropriate that this particular school song should contain the line “... the team will win that tries again”, as this gymnasium/ Performing Arts Centre project

had been on the agenda for over 20 years ! After the welcome by Mr Bruce van den Berg, the DHS vocal group presented a musical item, followed by the School Council President, and former Mayor of the City of Dandenong, Mrs Christine Ware, who told the comprehensive story of the dream, the planning/funding, and the fulfilment of the project which produced the venue for the day’s celebration. Now Stana Stargood, Edna’s daughter, herself an illustrious daughter of DHS, was introduced to the microphone. Stana told a wonderful tale of the weaving of generations of the Dawson family into the rich tapestry which is the life of a great school like ours. (A full text of Stana’s address appears within).

The dedication followed, the Ex-Student’s Assoc.- sponsored ‘Edna Vukmirovic Scholarship’ was presented to Andrea Rus, and after a gymnastics display, and a tableau presented by drama students, the School Captains, Louise Kut Moi Cheung and Ben Hoskin completed the impressive ceremony.

**THIS IS THE TEXT OF THE ADDRESS PRESENTED BY STANA SARGOOD AT THE DEDICATION OF THE EDNA DAWSON-VUKMIROVIC CENTRE.**

“Good morning to distinguished guests, school visitors, teachers and young people. Sixty five years ago in August 1933, the Dawson family came to Dandenong – my grandparents, Ellie and Frank and their five children, Edna, Ron, Marion, Phyllis and Noel. My mother Edna was a student at this school, then a junior student teacher, and then a teacher here for close to 40 years, teaching maths, french and music, as well as being senior mistress. In her retirement she was a member of the school council and life member of the Ex-Students Association enjoying many reunions and functions. Miss Dawson and Mrs V are fondly remembered. Since 1933, 3 generations of my family have been involved at the school. Edna’s brother, sisters, sister-in-law, nephews, nieces, niece and nephews-in-law and grand nephews have numbered as students, teachers, library staff, office support and a science lab technician – 23 members I think. When I was a student here I was surrounded by relatives – my mother, 2 aunts and seven cousins. Being the youngest cousin, my school books had many former owners in the family. For those of you whose parents or grandparents attended this school, it is likely that they

were taught by or had a school friend who was a member of the Dawson -Trigg-Yates - Vukmirovic family. So it is a fitting and proud tribute that our family name be attached to this centre to remember the ongoing involvement and contribution to this school. A second part of my thoughts concerns the function of this centre. The gymnasium aspect stumped me a bit at first as mum was short and unathletic, but I made a link that this gym is on the firmer hockey field – mum coached hockey teams! I hope this impressive gym facility encourages athletic opportunities and excellence as we move to 2000 and the Olympics. Certainly the drama, music and art aspects link to my mother and family without question. My grandmother has been remembered as a loyal attender of music, drama, choral and speech nights, seeing many productions instigated, supported and encouraged by my mother, aunt and cousins providing extra-curricular experience for many. Again my memories include cousins producing and participating in house dramas, school choirs and productions. Orchid house must be mentioned here. A wonderful link is yet to occur when the Performing Arts Centre is complete. There has also been a 52 year family association with the Dandenong Festival of Music and Art for Youth. I look forward to the time when sessions of the festival can occur in the Edna Dawson Vukmirovic Centre –entries from DHS drama & music students, DHS choir would be welcomed. What a fitting event

that will be and a penultimate thing for the School, City of Greater Dandenong and the Southern Region. Having said all this, we are not a family to boast, and look for recognition and limelight. We prefer to take quiet back seats without kudos. Public praise sits uneasily with us. So it is with humble gratitude that the family accepts this great honour bestowed on my mother’s memory. We know it acknowledges an era, a family and a person with love. What stirred my mother on and continues in our family is a combination of humour, enjoyment of community life, love of music, and above all a celebration of young people. Young people are our greatest resource, and they give us many gifts. This was my mother’s motivation – to provide opportunities and encouragement for each individual. I speak to you young people now. I remember the whole school sitting on the oval for the opening of the Griffiths Library – it offered new space, study areas, research and technology. Today we see a new opening – what is there for you? It is my hope that in the next years you have chances – chances to learn; chances to participate and enjoy; chances to watch and admire talents blooming. Whatever chances taken, you will remember. When you are 30-something some academic points may seem obscure, but there will be fond and clear memories of those extra-curricular activities associated with the Edna Dawson Vukmirovic Centre and DHS.

My primary school creed talked about the many hands needed to build a house and the many hearts needed to build a school. Many hands have begun this fine facility. I congratulate the planners, financiers, staff, builders and committees involved, but the many hearts that will make this centre are all those in the school and in the community who will enjoy, learn and live here. I wish you good luck, again acknowledge the tribute and I am happy to join Christine (Ware) in unveiling the plaque”.

**AMONG THE CROWD**

Noted among the visitors on this occasion were teaching staff from the 1950’s including Miss Hill, Mrs Daley, Molly Cowen, Judith and Eric Eckstein, and Max Oldmeadow O.A.M. with his wife Pam (Saunders), a former student.

**Dr Ken Griffiths was seated next to the editor and expressed great satisfaction with the facility.**

Ex-student Association members present included the President, Greta Jungwirth (de Vries), Robyn Browne, Wayne Smith and Robyn Stevenson, the latter playing an integral part as a Deputy Principal.

**PARS ABOUT PEOPLE**

**‘FROM THE CHAIR’**

**As we are approaching the year 2000 we are entering a new phase in the history of the school.** With the opening of the new arts, music and sports complex, the site has been further transformed. Early pupils of the school would hardly recognize the place.

Particular things have brought home the sense of change and the leaving behind of previous eras. The Association has recently received a number of original photographs and other items of memorabilia sent by thoughtful relatives of former pupils who have passed away. In accompanying letters they all stress how their parents spoke fondly of the school and their favourite teachers – and the good grounding for life they were given.

With the passing of earlier generations much history is lost: stories that should be told, fashions that formed the fabric of school life at various times and reflected the wider world.

It is important that individual experience is recorded, so head for your pens, or PC’s and start writing your pieces of ‘...I remember when...’, and send them in for publication, or just for posterity.

Greta Jungwirth (deVries)  
PRESIDENT

Major Andrew Lucena (1975-80) is part of a contingent of Australians participating in the stabilisation force in Bosnia for NATO. The contingent is attached to the British Army. He will be in Bosnia for 6 months in support and planning for the peace keeping forces.

**Christine Hutchinson (nee Downing), 1979-80, is a successful childrens theatre and ABC Performing Artist. She has published one book and produced 19 albums. Her Theatre in Education Program has been presented to primary age children in Australia, Asia, New Zealand and French Polynesia. She has also been twice nominated for the ARIA Best Childrens Release and was also an APRA nominee for the Most Played Childrens Release. Her latest recording, ‘Christines Amazing Adventure’ is soon to be available.**

NEXT EDITION: Is it a pre-requisite to be a DHS ex-student to be a ‘Living Legend’ of the City of Greater Dandenong?

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## CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

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sure you stay part of our special  
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And remember, you have  
already paid for the Newsletter  
and postage...why waste it?

## INFORMATION PLEASE !

**We want news about careers,  
achievements and social lives  
of Exies of all eras. Just phone  
Don Metcalfe 039 704 7938**

# REUNION 1999

March 26, 27, 28

In summary, this will take the following  
form:

1920's to 40's - Saturday Lunch -  
Dandenong Club.

1950's - School Social, Town Hall,  
Saturday Night.

1960's- Still formulating

1970's - BBQ in Hemmings Park with

1980's students.

School Open Day - Sunday from 11a.m.

# MEMBERSHIP MEMBERSHIP MEMBERSHIP

With the imminent mailout for the  
Reunion, we appeal to you to make certain  
your renewal comes in, and to nominate  
addresses of friends so that they can share  
in this great anniversary.

## **DHS Ex-Students Association - Office bearers & contact numbers:**

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Greta Jungwirth

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Ruby Constable

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