

## DAMASCUS CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF MERCY EDUCATION ON SITE

On Saturday, October 28, more than five hundred past students, staff and families of Damascus College and our founding Colleges Sacred Heart College, St Paul's Technical College and St Martin's in the Pines, gathered to celebrate the 50 year anniversary of Mercy education on the beautiful Damascus site.

The fifty acres of land was bequeathed to the Sisters of Mercy by Miss Alice Fanning upon her death in February 1960, in recognition of the care that she had received from the Sisters. In 1964 it was decided to develop the site for the Senior School of Sacred Heart College, St Martin's in the Pines and the foundation stone was laid in 1966. In 1995 this beautiful site that Alice bequeathed became Damascus College.



L-R: Sr Marie Davey, Fr Adrian McInerney, Matt Byrne, Sr Berenice Kerr

Sr Marie Davey, Sister of Mercy and Deputy Principal of Damascus College said that the planning for the day began as a celebration of a reunion of the students of 1967 – the first St Martin's students – but then we decided there were many more reasons to celebrate and so it developed into a wonderful gathering of people who have been part of the Mercy story. What a great decision!

"It was a really happy day that brought together people from across the decades to reminisce together, to be amazed at the changes that have taken place and to enjoy one another's company," she said.

Sr Marie is retiring at the end of this year, after 53 years in Catholic education, so this event was also a special occasion to recognise her and acclaim all that she has done for Damascus and Sacred Heart College communities.



To commemorate this anniversary, the College also opened and blessed the Commemorative Walk; a 240 metre bush walking track that leads to a Sharing Circle. This track hosts twelve signs in remembrance of those who have gone before us, both living and those who have died, and form an integral part of our Damascus College story. This is now a place for everyone to enjoy, where we can gather to reflect, learn, listen, grow and share stories and knowledge in a caring, respectful environment.

The celebration included formalities where past student, Dr Sandra Harvey (Class of 1973) spoke of how her Mercy education has shaped her life and Sr Veronica Lawson spoke of how the Sisters of Mercy came to develop our site to the beautiful College we have today.

The Damascus College choir sang lovely songs throughout the formal proceedings, including a wonderful rendition of the 'Suscipe' dedicated to the Sisters of Mercy.

"It truly was a special occasion where we enjoyed welcoming back past and present students, staff and families to celebrate this fifty year milestone of Mercy education on this site" said Sr Marie.





*Sarah Boswell - Leader of School Development*