



Janet Lady Clarke (1851-1909)

A lifetime of giving

whatsoever thy hand putteth to do, do it with all thy might'

(Janet's favourite motto)

2009 EVENTS

In 2009 Janet Clarke Hall is celebrating the life of Janet Lady Clarke and her legacy to the College and the wider society.

As alumna Jane Holth's short biography demonstrates, hers was a remarkable achievement among a generation of 'nation builders' who did much to shape the educational and social landscape of Victoria in the years to Federation, and she was rightly considered a hero by most Victorians at the time of her death. In order to commemorate her life, the College is hosting a series of special events to which all alumni and friends of the College are warmly invited. Taken together, they represent a celebration of education, culture and music all of which are at the heart of the College today.

We hope that you will join with us in the spirit of celebration.

Dr Damian Powell
Principal

ART UNVEILING AND ADDRESS

Sunday 6 September

2.00pm to 4.00pm

Dining Hall, Janet Clarke Hall
(Melway Map 2B reference C4)

Dr Gerard Vaughan, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, will unveil a newly commissioned painting of the College by alumna and leading Melbourne Artist **Victoria Watts**. In launching this work, Dr Vaughan will talk on '**Lady Clarke's Melbourne: Collecting and taste in the late 19th century**'.

VICE-REGAL ORATION

Tuesday 13 October

6.00pm to 7.30pm

The Spot Basement Theatre,
Economics and Commerce Building,
198 Berkeley St Carlton
(Melway Map 2B reference C9)

Her Excellency Quentin Bryce AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, will deliver an Oration in honour of Janet Lady Clarke on the topic of '**Women in Education**'.

BOOK LAUNCH

Tuesday 20 October

6.30pm to 8.00pm

Dining Hall, Janet Clarke Hall

Black Ink Publishing will launch the new novel 'Piano Lessons' by **Dr Anna Goldsworthy**, Peggy and Leslie Cranbourne Scholar and Artist in Residence.

PHOTO EXHIBITION

Tuesday 27 October

6.00pm to 8.00 pm

Dining Hall, Janet Clarke Hall

Mr Julian Burnside AO QC will launch 'New Imaginings: Photographic Journeys of Asylum Seekers' a photographic exhibition by asylum seekers initiated by Ms Zoe Dauth, resident tutor and University LIVE (Leadership, Involvement and Volunteer Experience) programs coordinator.

MUSIC RECITAL

Sunday 29 November

2.00pm to 4.00pm

Dining Hall, Janet Clarke Hall

Dr Anna Goldsworthy will perform **Chopin** in a 'Springtime Offering' concert also featuring our talented music students.



Janet Lady Clarke



A lifetime of giving

'I think very strongly that every woman should take pride in cultivating her intellect and learning all that is possible.' So wrote Janet Lady Clarke in 1897. It expresses the crux of her philosophy which led to her becoming the educational reformist whom we celebrate this year, the centenary of her death.

The origins of this philosophy can be traced to Janet Clarke's childhood. Growing up in a family committed to education but in reduced circumstances may have influenced her views on the importance of education for women. Indeed, Janet joined the Clarke household as governess to William and Mary Clarke's children. Two years after Mary's death in a carriage accident she married William and bore him eight more children. The Clarks were generous benefactors before Janet's marriage and she gradually took on the role of an active and generous lady of society. The first major philanthropic gift in her own name was to Trinity College, to which William had already donated a considerable sum. In 1883 the principal, Alexander Leeper, an advocate of higher education for women, enrolled some non-resident female students of Melbourne University in lectures at Trinity. Three years later he provided accommodation for them in a rented terrace house opposite the College. His idea of building a hostel needed a benefactor, and in 1890 Janet answered the call with a donation of £5000 towards the Janet Clarke building, with another £1000 to follow after appealing for funds from the public. Considering the education of the time, in which female students had only been attending Melbourne University for about 10 years, the Hostel was a socially progressive project. Community interest was not strong and Janet was forced to give the last £1000 before sufficient funds were raised. The building officially opened on 15 April 1891. In a letter to the Trinity Council Janet, now Lady Clarke, wrote: 'It was my very earnest desire to assist in providing the most liberal and advanced education for women that could be procured in this Colony ... It was a labour of love.'

Revealing her awareness of advances in education in England, Janet stipulated that the principal of the Anglican Hostel should be a graduate from the women's colleges of Girton or Newnham and that the Hostel should enrol girls from all religious backgrounds. Dr Leeper, Warden of Trinity College, selected Miss Emily Hensley from Newnham. The Trinity College Council established a Committee of Ladies to assist in running the Hostel, and Janet became its President. The new Hostel started with only four students which was a great disappointment to Miss Hensley and the Ladies

Committee. During the first two years the Committee struggled unsuccessfully with the men of Trinity to establish its control of the Hostel, and Miss Hensley resigned in disgust at the small number of residents. Dr Leeper appointed Mr J.T. Collins, a married Trinity College tutor, as her successor, ignoring Janet's stipulation. The Trinity Council also ignored Janet's requirement of girls of any class or creed, allowing only Trinity women to apply. Janet withdrew from Hostel affairs until 1897 when she contributed funds to the library and asked for it to be named after Sir George Verdon, a benefactor of Trinity and close friend. By 1904 when Miss Lucy Bateman was principal, the Hostel accepted students from all colleges. In that year Janet donated money for repairs to the building and expressed her hope for another wing. The Hostel was officially named Janet Clarke Hall in 1921 and formally separated from Trinity in 1961.

In 1904 Janet Clarke made a major contribution to education when she managed an appeal to save the University of Melbourne from bankruptcy. Merton Hall is indebted also to Janet Clarke. The core members of the Hostel Committee conceived the idea of a Church of England girls' high school to provide matriculation studies for girls of that faith who could then enter the Hostel.

Janet was active in establishing the Emily McPherson College, which trained women in domestic economy, and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Apart from her educational campaigns, Janet Lady Clarke worked for an extensive range of charities supporting the arts and social welfare. At a meeting to establish the first Alliance Francaise in Australia, Janet Clarke was the Présidente d'honneur. She was instrumental in founding the Dante Alighieri Society for lovers of Italian culture, and the Austral Salon of Music, Literature and the Arts, for women.

Her beneficiaries ranged from public institutions such as the City Newsboys' Society, the Melbourne District Nursing Society and the Hospital for Sick Children, to individuals and families. Universal suffrage for women in 1901 propelled Janet into becoming a leader in educating women in politics. By 1905 she had founded the Australian Women's National League and Australian Women's National Club. After contracting Maltese Fever overseas, Lady Clarke died 28 April 1909. Her philanthropic legacy remains one of the most extensive and enduring in Victoria, particularly in Janet Clarke Hall, which embodies her commitment to educational equity for women and girls.

Jane Holth

