



St. Mary's Past Students' Association

COR UNUM ET VIA UNA

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2023

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Introducing a New Look for SMPSA

Greetings, fellow alumnae! Moving forward to a new year, we are delighted to launch a new and refreshed look for SMPSA!

A New Logo

First, we would like to introduce to you our new logo. The SMPSA name, graphically backed by a silhouette of our school emblem, epitomizes the idea that our Alma Mater is forever at the core of our being, providing purpose and support all the time. In addition, the color band of orange and yellow symbolizes the union of past students from SMCS and SMCC respectively, celebrating a common love and care towards our Alma Mater.

This new logo will be the mark that seals our strong tie as a member of the St. Mary's alumnae family. We shall gradually apply it to our communication materials, and at a later stage, in our merchandise and souvenirs.



The new SMPSA logo.

A New Look for the Website

In addition, we are currently revamping our website with a new look to become more user-friendly and mobile-compatible, making the browsing experience easier and more enjoyable. Below is a preview of the new homepage. We plan to launch the new version in the second quarter of the year, so do stay tuned for updates!



School Drama 2023 - "Across the Street"

A Heart-warming and Entertaining Comeback



After a hiatus of three years, the SMCC annual drama production was finally back on stage.

During the week of 18-25 February 2023, our girls put on five wonderful shows of "Across the Street", an original story based on a scenario initiated by students from the Core Production Team, further developed and written by our beloved Loban, Mr. Geoff Oliver.



Guests happily taking pictures on Gala Night on 24 February 2023.

The 90-minute musical was set in the mid-Victorian period around the 1860s, a time of great enterprise and optimism, yet also arrogance by the upper and rising middle classes of Britain. Behind the facade of rapid wealth creation, the reality for many was nothing but a life of exploitation, degradation and poverty. "Across the Street" took the audience through a soul-searching experience on how the charitable heart could help those in poverty better their lives.

The performance was remarkably heart-warming and entertaining. After each show, emotions ran high for both the performers and the audience. During his closing speech, Mr. Oliver pointed out the challenges for this production. With the three-year hiatus, most of the students involved in the play had no prior experience. Moreover, while the school drama week had always been held in April in the past, the College Hall this year will have to be used as a HKDSE exam centre, inevitably causing a reschedule of the event to February, cutting the preparation time short by almost a month and a half.



Loban invites everyone to come watch another show next year!

Despite all these challenges, our girls made it in the end. It was a great effort with the tireless collaboration of many. Special thanks were also extended to alumnae Ms. Katie So, who helped as music arranger, and Ms. Flora Ku, who assisted in directing the play and attended to the needs of the girls throughout the production. And all these would not have been possible without the vision and leadership of Loban Mr. Oliver, and School Principal Ms. Janet Wong.

Thank you to everyone for giving such a jewel of a performance, proudly passing on the SMCC tradition. Touched by the energy and enthusiasm channelled by the students, and words of encouragement from Loban, we were all reminded to find the spark within us, light it up with all our passion, to achieve what may seem impossible.

Stay Healthy, Stay Happy

Interview with Ms. Sally Kwan, retired SMCC teacher

“I take it easy every day now,” said Ms. Sally Kwan with a smile, 30 years after her retirement. Ms. Kwan has taught at SMCC for 28 years from 1961 until retiring in the early 90s. Currently at the age of 92, Ms. Kwan is still going strong, and is happy to share her stories with past girls.

We talked to Ms. Kwan at her home on Austin Road. “I still have fond memories of the times when I was a teacher. The girls were mostly attentive and diligent, although at times there were also some naughty ones, which made life a bit challenging,” she said.

Ms. Kwan taught Mathematics and Integrated Science in junior forms. She still remembered some special happenings during class time. “Once, I was writing on the blackboard, and was moving very close to the edge of the platform. Then, accidentally, I tripped, and found myself sitting on the dustbin! The girls all burst out laughing, and of course I was not very happy. In the end, they did help me up, still giggling. Come to think of it now, it was a totally unexpected and funny moment, and I don’t blame them,” said a grinning Ms. Kwan.



A beaming Ms. Kwan sends her best wishes to all.



Working in the staff room, mid 1970s.

She also remembered the challenging times during Integrated Science class. “It had always been stressful when I had to teach the younger students how to use the Bunsen burner. The girls were often playful and not very careful with the flame. There would be the popping sounds from time to time, which always alarmed me. You know, that could be dangerous, and I wouldn’t want any one of them to get hurt,” she explained.

Recalling her own younger days, we discovered that Ms. Kwan had in fact studied at St. Mary’s during her early

secondary school days! “I liked St. Mary’s, although the teachers were quite strict, and we had to study hard,” she told us. “Nonetheless, since I lived in Kowloon City back then, my family wanted to move me to a school closer to home, so I left after three years and did not manage to complete my secondary school here,” she revealed.

Ms. Kwan’s academic interest was in chemistry. In the early 1950s, upon completing secondary school in Hong Kong, she continued her studies abroad at George Pepperdine College (currently Pepperdine University) in the US. “After college graduation, I worked at a big pharmacy, and was assigned to perform research on the impact of temperature change to various medicines,” she remembered. “In the laboratory, my colleagues were quite tall, but I was short. One day, they made me a special platform, so that I could work with them more easily,” she laughed. “They were very kind to me.”

After working in the US for two years, Ms. Kwan got the news that her mother was ill, and so she returned to Hong Kong to take care of her. At the same time, she realised that she preferred the lifestyle in Hong Kong rather than that of overseas. Therefore, she tried to look for a local job opportunity.

“Unfortunately, there were not many suitable openings during that time. The only option available was to work at a condiment company, doing research on sauces, and I would have to work solo.

That was not my cup of tea,” said Ms. Kwan. “On the other hand, I noticed a need for teachers, and decided that I should become a teacher instead to pass on my knowledge to students,” she added.

As a result, Ms. Kwan took another year to study for a special degree at HKU, which qualified her to be a teacher. “I joined St. Mary’s in 1961, and taught there until my official retirement in 1990. I stayed on for an extra year at the request of the school, and finally departed in 1991,” she explained. “School days at St. Mary’s were such a big part of my life that I found it very odd after retirement. My home is on Austin Road, and naturally, I could hear the school bells every day! That inevitably triggered some reflex reactions,” said Ms. Kwan, bursting into laughter.

In her retirement years, Ms. Kwan has been a keen traveller, and a loving grandmother. She also regularly meets with her friends and former colleagues for sharing of good food and a good game of mahjong. “These activities help to keep my mind active and alert over the years, and they contribute to my enjoyment in life,” she said.



Ms. Kwan shares a picture of her teenage self, wow!



Travelling along the Silk Road twenty years ago.

At the age of 92, Ms. Kwan is maintaining good health. One of the reasons is that she has always kept to a routine of exercise. “Swimming, that’s my hobby. I swam regularly since I was a teenager. I can still remember the times I learnt to swim at the swimming shed in Lai Chi Kok,” she said.

“I continued swimming even after retirement, usually for an hour or so, at a relaxing pace. No rush, just for the movement,” she said. “It was a pity that I had to stop a few years ago because of COVID restrictions. At the same time, there were some problems with my knees, and last year, I underwent knee surgery. All went well and I have now recovered, but I do need to walk slowly. My current exercise is a 45-minute daily stroll near home. It’s important to keep exercising!” she reminded us.

If you sit face-to-face with Ms. Kwan, you cannot help but notice the exceptionally good condition of her skin. We asked Ms. Kwan how she managed to maintain that. “I do have to acknowledge the help from anti-aging skincare products,” she said with a chuckle. “It is equally important to have enough rest, and to drink plenty of water,” she advised. “Try to avoid eating greasy stuff too, but I guess it’s ok to have some once in a while!” she added grinningly, acknowledging the foodie inside her.

At the end of our interview, Ms. Kwan would like to send her best regards to alumnae. “I miss the days I spent with my students. You are all grown up now, and I wish for good health and abundant happiness for you and your families,” Ms. Kwan said. “You may not be very familiar with me when you were at school, but I do treasure the memories with you. Do come and say hi if you see me!” she added.

Thank you, Ms. Kwan, for all you have done for St. Marians, and for sharing your wisdom and advice to a healthy life. We are delighted to hear from you, and we wish you all the very best in your golden years. We look forward to seeing you at our next reunion!



Ms. Kwan enjoys her family life and keeps a very organized collection of family pictures!

In Loving Memory



Sr. Severina Sattin, teacher at SMCC from 1971 to 1982, returned to our Father's House on 10 March 2022 at Canossian convent in Treviso, Italy, at the age of 90, after 71 years of religious life.

Sr. Severina was an English teacher. She had a cheerful personality, and enjoyed her engagement with students. Her kindness and friendliness had made a lasting impact on all who crossed path with her.

Ms. Elizabeth Fung (馮月釧老師), teacher at SMCC from 1972 to 1995, returned peacefully to God on 12 July 2022 in Vancouver, Canada.

Ms. Fung was a veteran History teacher, and students remembered her being inspiring and caring. She was also keen in Chinese calligraphy, and had her work showcased in our school magazines.

Ms. Fung moved to Vancouver, Canada, after retirement. She visited Hong Kong from time to time, and in 2010 she joined our 110th Anniversary Dinner, sharing a good time walking down memory lane with colleagues and students.



Sr. Cynthia Chan (陳心意修女), former School Supervisor of SMCC and SMCS, returned peacefully to the embrace of our Father on 25 October 2022, at the age of 76, at the Canossian Convent in Hong Kong, after 55 years of religious life.

Sr. Cynthia was School Supervisor of St. Mary's for almost three decades (SMCC from 1991 to 2007 and 2009 to 2020; SMCS from 1998 to 2006). She accompanied our Alma Mater through her 100th, 110th and 120th anniversary, and had guided and witnessed many school and student developments.

~ Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen. ~

...SCHOOL NEWS...

The Camphor Tree on the Big Steps

A recent inspection of the camphor tree located right next to the staircase in the middle of our big steps revealed the poor structural condition of the tree. It is leaning with a 45-degree angle to the vertical line, and the root plate movement has, therefore, been causing serious damage and distortion to the big steps and the staircase.

The School is required to remove the tree to ensure safety, and the surrounding area has now been closed off. Removal work is being planned, together with repair work for the steps and the staircase. Ms. Janet Wong, School Principal, indicated that plans have been in place using the wood from the cut tree to create furniture and decoration pieces. While we are sad to bid farewell to a tree that has accompanied generations of St. Marians, we are thankful that it will still remain within the St. Mary's family in a new and better form.



The camphor tree at risk.

Notice of the Annual General Meeting 2023 of St. Mary's Past Students' Association

Date : 25 March 2023 (Saturday)
Time : 3:00 pm
Venue : Geography Room, 2/F Marian Building, SMCC

Agenda

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 30 July 2022
2. Chairman's Report
3. Adoption of the Financial Report for the last financial year ending 31 August 2022
4. Election of office-bearers for the Council (College)* for the term 2023-2025
5. Election of office-bearers for the Council (School)* for the term 2023-2025
6. Formation of the Executive Committee of the SMPSA for the term 2023-2025
7. Any Other Business



* Only Life Members who are past students of the designated school are eligible to vote for the resolution.

Registration

Members of the Association are welcome to join the meeting. Please register your attendance by **21 March 2023**. Access will only be granted to those who have successfully pre-registered.

Please visit our website for more information www.stmaryspsa.org.

When entering the school premises, visitors are requested to:

- a) undergo identity verification at the school entrance;
- b) refrain from accessing restricted or closed off areas.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation.

SMPSA Newsletters – Un-spam us!



The Exco would like to remind members that we have ceased postal delivery of hard copies of our newsletter for environmental and efficiency reasons. To ensure that you can receive our newsletters in the future, please update your email address with our Membership Secretary at membershipsec@stmaryspsa.org.

We noticed occasional cases that our emails are being sent to the spam folder. Please add the address [<membershipsec@stmaryspsa.org>](mailto:membershipsec@stmaryspsa.org) to your safe senders' list, while still checking the spam folder at regular intervals. Members can also access newsletters through the SMPSA website.