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Westlake Girls  
High School  
**Alumni**  
**Newsletter December**  
**2015**

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## From the Alumni Co-ordinator



Hi everyone

A special welcome to our new alumnae – our Westlake Girls Graduating Class of 2015. I hope you enjoy a break now exams are over. Good luck as results come in next month.

We look forward to hearing about your progress as you settle in to tertiary study or other options you have in mind for 2016 and beyond.

*Cathy Roughan, Alumni Co-ordinator*

## What's new?

We have 3 new Facebook Groups for different year groups and hope you will join up.

Thanks in particular to *Jenny Wagener* and *Meredith McIlroy* for their help with their Class of 1991, *Gayle Coplestone* for the Class of 1985 research, and Simone Blackburn, Class of 2011.

[The Westlake Class of 1985](#)

[The Westlake Class of 1991](#)

[The Westlake Class of 2011](#)

## Alumna in the News

**Dr Lynne Coleman (née Donovan) MNZM**

MB ChB, Dip Obst, FRNZCGP; Dip Sports Med , PG DipBus, MInstD  
Westlake Class of 1977

**Sports doctor for high performance athletes in New Zealand**



Dr Lynne Coleman received an MNZM honour for services as a sports doctor in the Queen's Birthday Honours, 2015. This follows a long career as a GP and Obstetrician as well as in her specialised field as a sports doctor.

Dr Coleman, then Lynne Donovan, attended Westlake Girls from 1973-1977. She recalls, "Westlake Girls' High School and the education I received prepared me well for the rigors of medical school. I am very grateful to all the wonderful teachers I had and I have very fond memories of my time at Westlake".

She gained her medical degree in Auckland in 1985, her Diploma in Obstetrics in 1987, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Sports Medicine from Otago in 2001, while working full-time as a General Practitioner on North Shore.

She had long been keen on sport and the part sport plays in people's general well-being. Her first opportunity to work with elite athletes came in 2001 when she was designated as a Sports Doctor for the NZ Academy of Sport.

She has been involved with the medical team for the New Zealand Olympic and Commonwealth Games teams since 2004 Athens Olympics, including being Health Team co-leader for the 2006 Commonwealth Games, and then Health Team Leader for 2008 Beijing Olympics, 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games and 2012 London Olympics. She attended 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games as part of the health team and is scheduled to attend the 2016 Rio Olympics.

She is a founder partner at the Apollo Medical Centre. This opened in 2005 and is a general practice and accident and medical practice. Lynne works there combining sports medicine with her GP/urgent care work. She is now completing her Fellowship in Urgent Care.

Her long-standing commitment to NZ high-performance sport includes serving as a medical director for Swimming NZ, Athletics NZ and Basketball NZ and as a team doctor for many national men's and women's sports teams. She has been a Member of the Sports Tribunal of New Zealand since 2008, was a member of the Waitemata District Health Board from 2001- 2010, and has volunteered her time to the Regional Sports Trust on the North Shore (Harbour Sport) since 2006, and Wilson Home Trust since the early 2000s.

Lynne continues to work at the Apollo Medical Centre and also works with elite athletes 2 half days a week at the Millennium Institute.

*We are delighted to acknowledge Dr Coleman as one of our distinguished alumni and congratulate her on this national recognition.*

## Recent Alumni Events

### Westlake High School Get-together

The annual gathering for the co-ed alumni of our founding school, Westlake High School, 1957-1961, was held at Westlake Boys this year.

It was a great catch up for around 70 former students with displays and memorabilia.



**Get-together in London**

Roz Mexted met up with several of our former students in London in October. The group enjoyed an evening at the Admiralty Pub in Trafalgar Square.



**Westlake Art Exhibition**

The annual combined art exhibition for Westlake Girls and Boys current and past student artists was held at Northart Gallery in Northcote.



**Class of 2004 – 10 years on (one year late!)**

A group from the Class of 2004 met at Westlake for a catch-up and look around the school late in November.



*If there is interest from other Alumni Year Groups for a get-together at Westlake,*

*do get in touch, particularly for a decade reunion for your alumni year– 1966? 1976? 1986?.... We can support you in planning a get-together.*

## Staff Profiles

Two of Westlake's long-serving staff members are retiring this year, Sue McBride (Art) and Jocelyn Nasmyth (English). We wish them all the best and thank them for their many years helping students at Westlake.

Here they reflect on their time at Westlake.

### Sue McBride, HOD Visual Art



#### **My time at Westlake Reflections of a well-known Head of Department**

I came to Westlake in 1970 as a reliever, in the era of mini-skirts and 'op art' patterned fabric. There were about 800 students, a small staff to match and the school environment was almost rural. Ducks visited from Lake Pupuke as well as rabbits and

cows from Smale's farm. I was so impressed with the calibre of students and their rewarding art work that I stayed....and stayed.

Westlake Girls' staff were very sociable and based in two workrooms. It was there that you made friends for life. Our staffroom was always busy and was a central venue for meetings and events. When Principal Helen Ryburn held PPTA meetings, every staff member attended. The Hall was used for prize givings, balls, productions, performances and artwork days; all observed by photographs of three previous principals from the back wall.

There were two art rooms, B1 and B2, plus a concreted area with two kick wheels for producing pottery and an indoor kiln. There were two art teachers, myself and Betty Wong – who became Betty Sew Hoy and eventually moved to Los Angeles. Communication to students was with blackboard and chalk. Staff used a 'Banda' machine (using methylated spirits) to produce multiple notes for students and school reports were handwritten.

With a five day timetable and double art periods, the department grew. Julie Collis replaced Betty and we were joined by a part time teacher. 'Makeover Stage One' saw an office appear between B1 and B2, and a toilet block converted into a darkroom. B3 became a working space for students studying towards FA Prelim, plus Art History with the room divided in half! The kiln was moved outside and pottery wheels found more interested owners.

Over several years we had Art Days out, visiting Long Bay, Milford Marina and we caught a ferry to Motuihe Island. Some Art Days were in the school hall or we had Art Camps, where artists ran workshops, showed slides or talked about their work. This assisted students producing work for School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate and Fine Arts Preliminary, which became Bursary. Life Drawing classes were held after school in B1.

Art Departments in Auckland annually attended the Auckland Star Secondary Schools' Art Exhibition. We would drive over the bridge with our cars brimming to the roof with work for the selection process which was carried out by Art advisors and invited teachers. Size and scale was not a problem, as this was pre-NCEA. The opening was attended by anyone participating in Art education, as well as interested principals. The reputation of Westlake's Art Department grew with the work exhibited, as well as the work seen and recorded in external examination systems.

In 1988 'Makeover Stage Two' saw B Block become the Art Department, with the support of Principal Alison Gernhoefer and her Board. We were given a new darkroom, with a teaching space. A resource room was added for six staff; four general classrooms; an area for printmaking and a large space for senior painting, sculpture, design and art history. With further growth, design moved to a prefab and art history to another block with tiered seating. Community needs were changing and we had to adapt the curriculum offered to students, including the introduction of NCEA. Blackboards were replaced by white boards and we shared one computer between us, for reports. We gained a photocopier which was a real plus.

There were rewards with Art staff taking a group of students to Te Papa when it opened and to look at the exhibition of Wearable Art. Staff were given opportunities to visit galleries and exhibitions out of New Zealand, visiting Sydney and Melbourne.

In 2004 we moved again. This move brought art history and design back under the umbrella of the Art Department that now resided in A Block. We now had nine staff.

As an Art educator, I have always believed every student from Year 9 should participate in Core Art before moving into Year 10. Not every student comes into the school with an interest in the subject, or having had experience in a strongly structured art programme. It has always been a reward to hear a senior student talk about their early experiences when they first enter the school and how they became interested in the subject, leading to their continuation of some aspect of the Visual Arts when leaving school.

There have been many wonderful students. Seeing them coming through from Year 9 is what keeps you going. I can only name a few but there are many, many more. For example: Dr Ngarino Ellis, Senior Lecturer in Art History and Humanities at Auckland University; Heather Galbraith, Associate Professor in the School of Fine Arts, Massey University, Wellington; Monique Redmond, Lecturer at AUT; Sophie Wylie, Architect; Judy Millar, Painter.....and so it goes on.

### Jocelyn Nasmyth, English, Journalism



#### Thoughts after 30 years teaching at Westlake Girls - for Alumni

When I first arrived in Auckland, in January 1985, it was a cultureshock. To see bright green grass and blue sea as I crossed the Harbour Bridge each morning was dazzling, after the grey, bicycle ridden streets of Shanghai post the Cultural Revolution. I'd come from below zero, concrete floors, no heating, metal benches, woollen long johns

and balaclavas.

In a land of privilege and opportunity, it has been a challenge to educate North Shore girls. Over the years, the cohort has changed dramatically. I feel I brought China with me.

I have thrived teaching here. I've enjoyed such diversity. I've taught English mainly and really appreciated the opportunity to teach Cambridge Literature at IGCSE, A/S and A level alongside NCEA.

For many years, I also taught Year 12/Form 6 (before NCEA) Journalism and focused on producing an edition of *Cygnature* twice a year. This was an exhilarating and nerve-wracking, long- hour experience. In the early years I tried to teach Beginners Mandarin - but the native speakers soon sorted that!

For 15 years I was a Dean, alongside Janet Welch for the first 5+ years until Andrew arrived. This role as Dean was very fulfilling. The mentoring and



supporting troubled students was very rewarding and a great privilege.

When Kim Basse moved to Takapuna Grammar as a D.P., I accepted the role of Head of English. This was a very demanding position in charge of 3 year levels, 15 staff and teaching 4 classes. I was certainly spread very thinly. After 5 years at the helm, I chose to step down and take on the responsibility of Teacher in Charge of Year 13 and focus on Scholarship and Debating. This has been a really affirming move.

We have enjoyed many successes in Journalism, with awards for various sections of editions in *Cygnature* and latterly, *The College Herald* where students won computers. Over the years, we've won the annual Thorburn Debate against the Boys' School many times amidst the hilarity of a hall full of rowdy Year 13s, and teams' dressed as *The Three Graces* or walking in to music belting out "*We Are the Champions*"

In English we've enjoyed great success in Scholarship, particularly over the past 2 years when we've been awarded 14 each year. This can be partially attributed to the early morning lectures mainly from the English teaching staff, for extension Year 12 and Year 13. We averaged over 30 students, up to 60 at times. While I was HOD we enjoyed a focus on "English Weeks" with student led activities, book swaps, Shakespeare days when the English teachers hired outfits and we even had an Elizabethan banquet complete with Great Dane.

I'm sold up in Auckland and will be on the road to Kerikeri, Bay of Islands on December 08 for R and R.

I'm looking to new opportunities, free of gridlock, queues, traffic lights and concrete to the lush, green, orange groves and time to talk and enjoy people's company in a walk or over a coffee without one eye on the clock. The Saturday Kerikeri market is stunning and reflective of the local community's interests and talents.

I look forward to welcoming visitors and being in touch by email.

Jocelyn Nasmyth [Ms] Contact through [alumni@westlakegirls.school.nz](mailto:alumni@westlakegirls.school.nz)

## Visitors to Westlake 2015

### Alumnae Visits to Westlake

Thanks to these ex students who have visited Westlake and engaged with our students this year in various ways.

**Kayla McAlister** (2006), Ripa Rugby, Have a Go sessions; **Jannah Wootten** (2002), Sports Facilities; **Tanya Gray** (2006), Code Club; **Sarah Cross** (2004), Young Enterprise Group; **Lisa Liu** (2002), Year 13 Design Class; Amanda Clinton (2004), Women in Engineering University of Auckland, **Emma Sowry** (2014), Studying at Lincoln University; **Bo-Ryehn Chung** (2013), Studying in the US; **Simone Blackburn** (2011), Alumni Association and Y13 Leavers Assembly speaker; **Chloe Baynes** (2011), Dance Choreography, Jenny Wagener (Willis) (1991), prizegiving, Meghan McIlwain (2003), Representative of Auckland University at Prizegiving, Sarah-Kate Miller, Representative of AUT at prizegiving and **Jo Aleh** (2004), Junior Sports Programme, *Cygnets*.

### Alumna Guest Speaker, 2015 Prizegiving

Dr Jenny Wagener (née Willis), Class of 1991

**Surgeon, Missionary Surgeon: BHB,  
MB ChB (1998), FRACS (2008)**

Jenny Wagener (Willis) returned to Westlake Girls as the guest speaker at the 2015 prizegiving. It was an inspiring presentation, with students and families able to hear about some of Jenny's journey since leaving Westlake in 1991, and her



message and advice to those leaving Westlake this year. Jenny had a challenge for the students, when planning and working towards their goals, to take it one step further and think about how those decisions could have an impact on others. Her own course reflects her desire to use her skills to benefit others, as well as the importance of family support and focusing on what is really important.

Jenny left Westlake planning to be a nurse and had received encouragement from her teachers to also apply for Medical School, for which she was accepted. It was a short visit to a mission in Tanzania in 1993, after a year of study at Auckland University, that confirmed her desire to train to be a doctor and return to Tanzania to help the local people, mainly Masai communities – something that had been a dream since she was 3.

Jenny spent 6 years as a volunteer medical missionary in Arusha, Tanzania, from 2007 to 2013, living and working there with her husband and 4 children. Balancing work and family, she ran a weekly clinic and had a weekly operating schedule based at the Selian Lutheran Hospital, often under challenging conditions. Her special interests there were thyroid and prostate surgery and surgical education. During that time she also worked several short stints as a locum doing surgery throughout rural Australia.

Jenny is now a surgeon at Middlemore Hospital where she deals with a range of acute and elective surgical conditions. Her main interest is in breast and thyroid surgery. She is a member of the Breast Surgeons of Australia and New Zealand and is also an Honorary lecturer at the University of Auckland Medical School.

Along the way, Jenny has followed a variety of other interests. She is a church pastor and former Marriage Celebrant. She also has her private pilot licence and enjoys hiking and running half marathons.

*We are delighted that Jenny has reconnected with us and with her interest in her old school.*

*Her alumni year, (Form 7 1991), are building up a network and are planning a 'Quarter of a Century on!' get together later next year.*

## Alumna Visitor to Westlake

**Kayla McAlister: Class of 2006  
New Zealand Women's Sevens**



Kayla McAlister is a member of the New Zealand Women's Sevens team. She was also a member of 2013 team that won the Women's Sevens World Cup held in Moscow, Russia. She visited Westlake in Term 3, 2015 for a series of lunchtime coaching sessions (Rippa Rugby: Have a Go) to encourage girls to play rugby.

Kayla comments, "It was great getting back to my old stomping ground, seeing some talented girls and especially seeing the new sporting facilities".

Kayla played netball throughout her school years, with obvious talent, and by 2011 was playing for the Northern Mystics netball team in the ANZ Championship.

"When I was at Westlake Girls, netball and touch were the main sports I played, as women's rugby wasn't very big back then. But now, having the game of rugby sevens as an Olympic sport, it is a great pathway for girls to make a career out of and potentially experience the world's largest sporting pinnacle event (the Olympics)".

There was already a strong family interest in rugby, with her brother, Luke, (WBHS) an All Black, but Kayla's interest in rugby was only sparked when the NZ Rugby Union had a campaign 'Go4Gold' in 2012, promoting Women's Sevens for the 2016 Rio Olympics. After trialling, Kayla was named in the 2012 NZ squad which took part in the Women's World Rugby Sevens series, and also has for 2013, 2014 and 2015 seasons. They travel and play in tournaments held in places such as Dubai, China, Brazil, London, Amsterdam, America and Canada.

"It's not a bad way to see the world - playing sport whilst representing your country and family and of course getting in some great shopping too".

Although Kayla switched to rugby relatively late, she has been very successful and was named the IRB Women's Sevens Player of the Year, the same year that New Zealand won the Women's Sevens World cup in 2013.

There are a number of steps and another whole series to travel and play before the Olympics in August 2016. She has combined her playing with a full-time job as a Judicial Support Officer with the Ministry of Justice for several years, but with training every day now and being a full time contracted Sevens player, she has recently made a switch to studying part time. Now, she trains every morning and afternoon (on the North Shore at the NZ High Performance Centre) and travels to tournaments whilst studying Early Childhood through the New Zealand Tertiary College.

We look forward to following her path to Rio over the next year.

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#### Other national sporting alumnae

Three ex-students, currently playing in national teams attended the Annual Westlake Girls Sports Dinner as guest presenters of awards: Brooke Miller (2008) NZ Waterpolo, Toa Tanimo (2012) Samoan Netball team at the World Cup, and Jasmine Myles (2008) NZ Waterpolo.





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## Westlake News 2015

### What's been happening at Westlake?

The Library has had a major rebuild and refurbishment and was re-opened by the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. John Key in September. He also spoke at a 'School Leaders Breakfast' for student leaders.



Celebrating the opening of the new Library

### *Library plaque*

The Library plaque was made by WGHS teacher, Mr Jez Scull, from a Westlake totara that fell in a storm. It is thought to have been planted at Westlake's founding in 1957.



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## Alumni updates

### Ellaine and Jenna Ford, Class of 2008 and 2010

Two of our ex-students, sisters Ellaine and Jenna Ford completed the ASB Auckland marathon in November. Along with their brother Richard, they were raising money for the charity 'Look Good, Feel Better' supporting women with cancer. This was in honour of their mother who battled breast cancer for about 10 years before passing away 5 years ago.

Ellaine was the WGHS Y13 Class of 2008 and Jenna, Class of 2010. Ellaine is now a primary school teacher and Jenna has just finished her physiotherapy training and will join a clinic in 2016. They raised over \$4500 for their charity.



<http://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/local-news/north-shore-times/73294317/siblings-doing-auckland-marathon-for-look-good-feel-better>

### Christina Reddaway, Class of 2009

Congratulations to ex Westlake Girls student Christina Reddaway (Class of 2009) on being awarded one of the inaugural Kupe Scholarships from the Ministry of Education, recognising Maori and Pasifika student teachers who will make a contribution to the community in the future. Christina will teach at Lynfield College next year.



<http://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/local-news/north-shore-times/73007791/pasifika-scholars-acknowledged>

### **Georgia Cassidy, Class of 2012**

Ex-Westlake Girls student Georgia Cassidy (2012) is climbing to the Mt Everest Base Camp in December to raise awareness and funds for the 'One Girl' Campaign helping girls in Sierra Leone receive a high school education. Georgia is based in Hong Kong on a year's university exchange at the City University of Hong Kong after being awarded the Prime Minister's Scholarship for Asia.



### **Lauren Bennett, Class of 2013**

Congratulations to the 'Tasman Duo' consisting of ex-Westlake Girls student Lauren Bennett, Class of 2013, and Bradley Wood, on winning the 10th Pettman/ROSL (Royal Overseas League) Scholarship. The duo will travel to Europe in 2016.



## Coming Events - 2016

### Get-together for former Westlake staff - Early April

A shared morning tea and informal catch-up with former colleagues at Westlake. Details will be confirmed and emailed out at the beginning of the school year in February.

### Save the date: Class of 1991 – A Quarter of a Century On!

A small group from the 1991 alumni year are underway contacting as many as possible from that year (Form 7 1991 and those who left before their Form 7 year) for a 25 year get-together on Saturday 17th September 2016 (TBC).

### Westlake High School Founders Morning Tea (WHS 1957 – 1961)

The annual get-together will be hosted by Westlake Girls High School in 2016. The date will be confirmed early in the new school year and details emailed out. It is likely to be in September / October.

### Possible 'Recent Leavers' function

Westlake Boys holds an annual alumni function for its Recent Leavers. We are thinking about having something similar at Westlake Girls, possibly around the end of the university semester, late June or early July. It would be a chance for our graduates from the last few years to get in touch again, aimed at those from the alumni years of 2010 – 2014. There will be communication through our Facebook groups but I hope to engage with a small group from each year level to gauge interest and help in some way.

*Email if you are interested in being involved. [alumni@westlakegirls.school.nz](mailto:alumni@westlakegirls.school.nz)*

## Alumni Association Update

Our Alumni Facebook Page now has 1460 likes and our newsletter reaches 1800 alumni.

- [Class of 1987](#)
- [Class of 2008](#)
- [Class of 2009](#)
- [Class of 2010](#)
- [Class of 2012](#)
- [Class of 2013](#)
- [Class of 2014](#)
- [Key Cygnetures \(Choir\)](#)
- [Choralation Alumni](#)
- [Westlake Boys Alumni Page \(Westlakers\)](#)
- [Westlake Symphony Orchestra Alumni](#)
- [Westlake Girls Alumni Australia](#)
- [Westlake Girls Alumni UK](#)

*Thanks to everyone for their support of our Westlake alumni community and in particular to Hannah Dymond for her great help in producing this newsletter.*

### NOTE on PRIVACY and GATHERING of DATA

The information that you have already provided in signing up to the Alumni Association is collected by Westlake Girls High School's Alumni Association for the purpose of keeping

in contact with you about the School, its former students and staff, and about the Alumni Association and its activities. Your personal information may be stored by the Alumni Association using a cloud storage facility such as Google. Your personal information will not be used for any other purpose, or shared with any other person or organisation, without your consent. You may, at any time, request access to, and correction of, your personal information by contacting the Alumni Association at [alumni@westlakegirls.school.nz](mailto:alumni@westlakegirls.school.nz).



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The Alumni Association thanks WGHS alumna, Hannah Dymond for her time and expertise in producing this newsletter.

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