

# Otago Girls' High School Alumni Association

# Principal's report

Kia ora koutou

Warm Greetings to you all!

This year has been extraordinary and it is hard to believe Term Four is approaching already. I want to commend our students on the way they have shown resilience and strength in coping with illness and upheaval in their learning over the year. School Spirit has never been stronger and we have just enjoyed Freedom Week and Cultural Day in August, the return of Sports Tournament Week, Polyfest, a fabulous delayed Sports Day, and a 'Gold Coin Gig' and Shave for a Cure at the end of Term Three. Camps, concerts, cultural performances, music and sport are thriving again in the school, following two and a half years of interruption and cancellation. The school blossom trees and daffodils reflect this hopeful time and are a promise of the Summer terms to come.

Otago Girls' High School has much to look forward to with our annual Celebration Service coming up at 6:00 pm on Tuesday 1st November. We welcome ex-girls and our school community to join us in celebrating the theme of Belonging. In line with this theme, Meng Foon, Race Relations Commissioner for New Zealand, will visit our school and speak at assembly and run workshops on Tuesday 25th October. We are honoured to have him with us.

We are nearly through our Year 8 interviews with our 2023 intake and their families. I have been wonderfully impressed with the enthusiasm and positive attitude of these students and we very much look forward to welcoming them into our school next year. We are currently formulating a 'Sisters' programme, based on tuakana-teina principles, where relationships will be nurtured between Year 13 and Year 9 students, again contributing to our sense of school spirit and belonging.

Students continue to excel in their academic, sporting, cultural and leadership endeavours. These will be celebrated at our Cultural and Sporting Blues evenings early in Term Four. I continue to be amazed and impressed by the ability of individuals and teams to balance a large range of school and service activities alongside their schoolwork. I also acknowledge the important role of families in encouraging and supporting these activities. We are excited to draw attention to the upcoming appeal for the school activities of rowing, kapa haka and choir



*Bridget Davidson*

and encourage you to show your support here in a small or large way. These are difficult economic times in schools and any contribution from our alumni goes a long way for our young people.

We will be making contact with all of our ex-girls associations over the coming months and hoping to schedule some events for 2023.

Ngā mihi nui  
Bridget Davidson  
Tumuaki ~ Principal



## Sophia Niblock- OGHS 2017-2021

We received some exciting news recently that (ex-student) Sophia Niblock (2021) has won the Progear "Our People" National Black & White Portrait Photography Competition.

This is a bi-annual competition and last year there were 270 entries from secondary school students all over New Zealand.

Sophia entered the competition as a Year 13 Photography student but the end date for the competition got pushed out because of Covid. Sophia has won a Nikon camera and twin lens kit and the second part of the prize is a photography lighting kit for the school valued at \$1962.00.

Congratulations Sophia!



## **G**abi Summerfield - OGHS 2017-2021

My name's Gabi Summerfield, and I'm an ex Otago Girls student currently studying at Otago University.

I've been a keen musician from a very young age. After being encouraged by my parents to pick an instrument to learn at six, I spent ten years in and out of violin, guitar, oboe, and singing lessons exploring my huge desire to gain musical skills and knowledge. I can only applaud my family for listening to me practice in the early days, but I'm very grateful they encouraged me to keep pursuing music! In my later high school years, I began to settle and hone my love of making music on and off the stage, and songwriting became my preferred musical pursuit. Alongside choirs and orchestras, I enjoyed my quintessential kiwi experiences of Rockquest and school assembly performances, showcasing what I can do as an individual. During school, and continuing today, music has been both a sanctuary and a challenge, constantly providing comfort and new challenges. I am incredibly thankful for the music experience I had at Otago Girls, it was pivotal in my decision to pursue it as a career.

I've had lots of success in music in recent years, the most exciting of which is my selection into the New Zealand's Symphony Orchestra in 2021, and being a recipient of the Otago University Six60 Scholarship this year.

The NZSO performance included travelling to Wellington, and practicing and recording a song I had written with the orchestra. It was an incredibly exciting and fulfilling experience! It shaped me as a person and performer completely, and during the week I was recording with the orchestra I got a glimpse of what a future pursuing music could feel like. Truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I'm very proud of the recording.

Recently I was awarded the Six60 scholarship by the university, another exciting moment for me as a musician. The scholarship includes a rent rebate and the opportunity to live in 660 Castle Street, the band's old flat and namesake, as well as mentorship from the band. I'm hoping the scholarship provides me time and space to create as much as possible, and experiences which help grow my musical skills. I feel very privileged to have access to such an amazing opportunity, and I'm excited to see what next year holds.

Music has been such a brilliant constant in my life, and I'm very excited to continue to grow as a person and performer while I study.



### **Keep us informed**

If you know of ex-girls doing exciting things please let us know.

Email any contributions to [alumni@otagogirls.school.nz](mailto:alumni@otagogirls.school.nz)

Please remember to keep us updated with your current email address. Every time we send this newsletter out we find we have a large number of email addresses that are no longer active.

# Kathleen Miller 1924-1925

## NZ Olympian 1928

Nora Kathleen Miller was a New Zealand swimmer, and attended the Olympic Summer Games in Amsterdam in 1928.

Kathleen (also known as Kay) was born in Dunedin in 1909 to parents Donald Miller and his wife, Annie Maria (nee Lefevre). Eleven months after she was born her father died of pneumonia at the age of 46 leaving her mum and six daughters of whom Kathleen was the youngest.

She attended primary school at Palmerston, Kaikorai and High Street Schools. Kathleen attended Otago Girls' High School in 1924 for two years. Her sisters Evelyn Margaret and Lilius Irene had both previously been pupils at Otago Girls'.

Kathleen was a member of the Kiwi Amateur Swimming Club and in 1926 was the New Zealand Intermediate 220 yards freestyle champion. In 1927 she won the 220 yards and 440 yards New Zealand senior women freestyle titles.

Kathleen was the first Otago Girls' High School student to compete at an Olympic Games and New Zealand's 19th Olympian. Kathleen's mother, Annie Miller, travelled with the New Zealand Olympic Team as a chaperone.

Miller entered both the 100 metre freestyle and the 400 metre freestyle, where she qualified for the semi-finals in both events.

Swimming 100m Freestyle - Placed 12 of 24

Swimming 400m Freestyle - Placed 10 of 20

Kathleen retired from competitive swimming after the Olympics and became a swimming coach. Later she represented Otago and then Wellington for hockey. She was the sports and physical culture mistress at Chilton House School in Lower Hutt.

On 25 May 1940 she married Kenneth Albert McFarlane in Wanganui. Kathleen (Kay) McFarlane died in Wanganui on 16 April 1963 aged 53 years old. They had no children.

Thank you to Kathleen's great nephew Hugh Henderson who got in contact with us recently.

### MISS KATHLEEN MILLER RETURNS. FOUND THE AMERICAN LADIES AT OLYMPIC GAMES TOO SPEEDY.

Miss Kathleen Miller, who was a member of the team that represented New Zealand at the Olympic Games, accompanied by Mrs Miller, arrived in Christchurch this morning, en route to Dunedin.

Miss Miller said the swimming at the Games was wonderful. She was impressed particularly with the swimming of Miss Märtha Norelius, whose stroke, she said, much resembled her own, save that Miss Norelius plained higher in the water. Miss Miller returned a time of 6min 10sec when she was placed in her heat of the 400 metres event, and considers that if she could have shown her New Zealand form in the final she would probably have been third, and certainly not further back than fourth.

The American swimming standard, she said, was very high and the swimmers trained hard. She found them good opponents and very good sports. Save for Miss Cooper, the sprinter, Miss Miller considers that the English girls are not up to the best New Zealand standard. The South Africans showed very good form, their standard being surprisingly high.

Miss Miller and Miss Stockley showed much better form at the Tailteann Games in Ireland than they did at the Olympic Games. Miss Miller had no trouble in winning the 400 metres event and in smashing the Tailteann record made by Miss Shand four years ago. Miss Miller thinks Miss Stockley was unlucky not to win the sprint event. The swimming conditions at the Tailteann Games were very bad, the temperature of the water being 32 degrees.

The New Zealand girls had great difficulty in securing proper training facilities in Amsterdam before the Games, until Mr John Hodgson, president of the Northern Counties Swimming Association in England interested himself on their behalf and secured their admission to the Stadium bath.

Miss Miller was warm in her praise of the assistance given to her and Miss Stockley by Miss Lambert, one of the American Olympic officials, whom they met at Panama. "Miss Lambert gave us some very useful hints," said Miss Miller, "and treated us very hospitably."

## Miss Miller Wins Tailteann Swim BRILLIANT VICTORY

RECORD REDUCED BY 28 1-5  
SECONDS

(United P.A.—By Telegraph—Copyright)

(Australian and N.Z. Press Association.)

Recd. 1.30 p.m. DUBLIN, Tuesday.

Swimming 14 1-5sec faster than yesterday, Miss Kathleen Millar brilliantly won the 400 metres final heat. The times indicated the closest race between Miss Millar and Miss Davey, but the New Zealander was never challenged.

The Australian girl was beaten by 20 yards, and had to swim hard to stave off Miss Laverty, who finished two yards behind her, third. Miss Millar reduced Miss Shand's Tailteann record by 28 1-5sec.

Results:—

Women's 400 Metres Swim.—Miss Kathleen Miller (New Zealand), 6min 10 4-5sec, 1; Miss Davey (Australia), 2; Miss Laverty (England) 3.

Men's 400 Metres Free-style Swim.—First heat: Spence (Canada), 5min 21sec, 1; Ault (Canada), 2; Lindsay (New Zealand) 3.





OTAGO GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL	
OLYMPIC REPRESENTATIVES	
<i>Recti Cultus Pectora Roborant</i>	
928	Kathleen Miller, Swimming
948	Ngaire Lane, Swimming
952	Jean Stewart, Swimming - Bronze Medal
952	Yvette Williams, Athletics - Gold Medal
956	Jean Stewart, Swimming
976	Allison Calder, Swimming

Olympic Sports honours boards in the gym foyer.

## Highgate Fellowship

A huge congratulations to our Year 10 Dean, Jo Nielson who was announced as the winner of the prestigious Otago Girls' High School Highgate Fellowship. This fellowship rewards Ms Nielson for her outstanding contribution to the school and provides her with an extended professional development opportunity that will benefit the school and the recipient. Well done Ms Nielson!!



Nikita Hancock's superb painting took out the Excellence Award for Otago Girls' High School at the Opening & Awards Ceremony of the "Celebrate Art 2022" Otago Secondary Schools Art Awards in August.

## Rachael Baxter - OGHS 2009-2013

Since finishing up my time at Otago Girls' High School at the end of 2013, I have been at the University of Otago, and to the University of Cambridge to study volcanoes. After gaining my Bachelors in Geology, I did a Masters thesis, studying the extinct Dunedin Volcano, for which the early



eruptions are recorded and preserved in the cliffs at Allans Beach on the Peninsula. Since finishing that degree, two papers have been published on how the early behaviour of our volcano heralded how it would continue to evolve over the next six million years of its activity. In 2019, I moved to the UK to work on a PhD with the University of Cambridge, to study Icelandic volcanoes. Unfortunately, six months into this project the pandemic began and I had to return to New Zealand. I was unable to return to Cambridge to finish the PhD, but was still able to complete an MPhil, focused on investigating the depths at which magma chambers in Iceland and along mid-ocean ridges sit. Although leaving that project felt very drastic at the time it has turned into a surprisingly good path for me. I will be beginning a new PhD with my old MSc supervisor at the University of Otago. In the meantime I have had the delight of being part of a many different projects! I was running an Artificial Volcanic Fissure experimental rig for a year and am now helping the new PhD student dedicated to the project. With the current eruption in Iceland starting out as a fissure it is very exciting to have a machine to test our ideas how these fissure eruptions evolve over time. I have also been studying some ash particles from an assortment of geologically recent eruptions, including some from the 1886 Tarawera eruption, and very exciting, samples from the big eruption near Tonga earlier this year. We had ash samples to study less than a week after that eruption! The current plans for the new PhD are being organised still, but with any luck, I will get to look at the structure of magma systems from multiple volcanoes around the world, to compare how different and similar they are in places where the crust is being uplifted or subsiding. Although the last few years have been a wild ride, being involved in such exciting volcanology research, that I could not have imagined participating in back in high school, is pretty epic, and I am stoked at how life is going.



*Setting up the camera in preparation for an experiment on the Artificial Volcanic Fissure machine, to study and model how lava erupting out of volcanic fissures is controlled by the shape of the crack it is moving through. At the geology department in the University of Otago*



*Teaching a group of 1st year geology students about the formation of the Moeraki Boulders, and the regional geology of the east coast of Otago.*



*In the field, clearing off the surface of some sandstone, to have a look at the layers deposited by different currents in a shallow sea during the Miocene, before the Dunedin Volcano began.*

## Laura Wells - OGHS 2000-2004

Kia ora koutou katoa

I'm Laura and I was an Otago Girls' student from 2000 to 2004 and loved anything and everything to do with performing. This passion remained when I left in 2004, going straight into the Theatre Studies department at Otago University. Fast-forward now almost 20 years and I'm fortunate to have been given the opportunity to play some dream roles in local Dunedin productions, totalling (so far) 44 and counting!

I've earned several nominations in the Dunedin Theatre Awards and was thrilled to receive my first award in 2019 for a comedic role I played in the Globe Theatre's production of *Ophelia Thinks Harder*.

Maintaining theatre as an 'on-the-side' interest means that I often have a hectic schedule, balancing my full time management position with late night rehearsals and performances as well as a busy home life – and somehow, from 2016 to 2020 I managed to also find time to complete a bachelor's degree through the Open Polytechnic. I think it's safe to say I'm done with study now.

In 2014, I was part of a close group of practitioners who wanted to undertake theatre projects that gave back to our wonderful community and, subsequently, Suitcase Theatre was formed. Suitcase's kaupapa is to produce theatre with heart, make meaningful connections, and support our community and we aim to fulfil our charitable purpose by assisting in fundraising for other local charities (like Life Matters Suicide Prevention Trust, Rape Crisis, Victim Support and Stopping Violence Dunedin, to name a few).

We have a list of highly successful productions behind us – including *Dear Boobs on Stage* which was a piece I directed sharing letters that women who had experienced breast cancer had written to their breasts. It was an incredibly beautiful, unique, and inspiring piece of theatre, which saw us set up on the main stage at the Regent Theatre – an amazing outcome for my directorial debut! The show sold out all performances before opening night. We were inundated with letters of support and admiration from communities around New Zealand and beyond and had multiple offers to perform in theatres around the country. A nationwide tour was quickly planned but interrupted by COVID and lack of funding which was disappointing.

Under Suitcase Theatre, I am currently working on an adaptation of Roald Dahl's short story *Lamb to the Slaughter* which I was first introduced to during my junior years at Otago Girls, and I've wanted to take it to the stage ever since. This will be staged at the Playhouse Theatre during the Dunedin Fringe Festival in March 2023 and promises the audience an even

more twisted story than they may remember...

I owe a lot of my continued passion in theatre to my years at Otago Girls', and will be forever grateful for the support of the teachers and my fellow students at the time. Nga mihi maioha.



*As Titania in A Midsummer Night's Dream*



*Laura (middle) with the cast of Dear Boobs on Stage*



*As villain Lenya In Bullshot Crummond*

## Rachel Macindoe-Baker OGHS 2009-2013

Kia Ora, my name is Rachel. I grew up in Dunedin and attended Otago Girls' from 2009-2013.

Growing up, I was the "art kid" and enjoyed writing and drawing from a young age. I'd always been interested in filmmaking, and found myself getting more and more into 2D

animation during high school as it married my love of movies and illustration, and I enjoyed the freedom it gave me to bring worlds and characters to life.

After graduating OGHS I made the move to windy Wellington to study Media Design and Film Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. This opened up my eyes to a whole new range of digital art forms and I found myself taking a particular interest in game design and 3D animation. Not wanting to completely abandon my love for hand drawn animation, I also used the opportunity to experiment more with combining 2D and 3D animation.

I eventually graduated with a Bachelor of Design Innovation in 2017, and found myself freelancing for a while in the Motion Graphics/advertising space. While this was a great experience, and taught me how to project manage and work with clients, freelancing was never really the goal, and I was craving a more collaborative environment. Having completed what was a very broad undergrad degree, and experiencing many a rejection, I knew I needed to upskill and specialise to get where I wanted to be. So I returned to study in 2020-2021 (a chaotic year that it was), and completed a Masters of Design Technology.

It was a short and intense degree that culminated in a final summer semester dedicated to creating a short film. It was a stressful, but amazing experience, functioning as a crash-course in everything VFX. I learnt a lot in a very short amount of time. While there, I met some amazing people, and had the opportunity to work for UMusic, creating a music visualiser for Niko Walters song Escape, and later animated content for their social media.

As the year rolled by, as part of the course I pitched a short film about an alien learning to cope with change. I was very nervous as the pitch was for an entirely CGI film with an ambitious scope (a big ask for only nine weeks), but amazingly my pitch was chosen as one of two concepts to move forward, and I wound up directing what would later be named Chrysalis.



I worked with four extremely talented people who were able to really expand on my original concepts and bring the idea to life.

We used motion capture to record much of the animation, and composed and rendered final shots in Unreal Engine (a game engine that has recently been entering the film/tv space). After roughly three months of hard work, both our teams screened our films at Roxy cinema alongside the Master of Fine Arts shorts, where we had the opportunity to show off to the community, including some members of Wētā FX (formally Weta Digital). I was fortunate enough to get a job as a Junior Animator at the company later that year.

Working at Wētā FX has been an amazing experience so far, and I've been lucky to work with some very talented people who have taught me a lot. It's been humbling to work on such large projects, and to see just how much manpower goes into crafting every detail. Earlier this year, I was extremely excited to receive my first credit for working on Doctor Strange and the Multiverse of Madness and am looking forward to seeing a couple more shows in cinemas before the year's end.

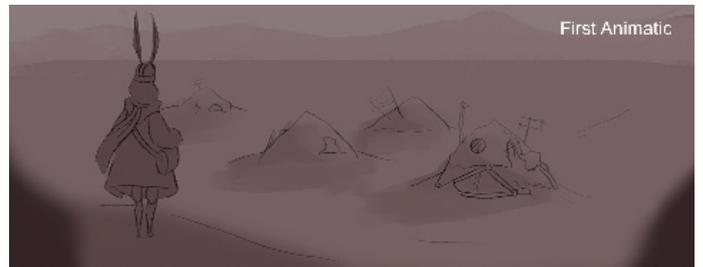
This year I've also been lecturing/tutoring 2D animation at the university on the side, which has made for a nice excuse to revisit my original passion for hand drawn animation. I really enjoy the expressiveness of character animation, and one day I'd really love to work in feature animation, or otherwise a small games studio as I enjoy being more of a generalist.

If I had any advice for graduating students it would be that if you choose to go to university, go into it not just looking for a degree or to tick boxes, but for personal growth. A big part of further education is just learning how to learn, and university can provide you with the time and space to experiment and grow your portfolio; all while getting real, professional feedback on your work. But it's also a wonderful place to meet like-minded people and mesh unique talents and ideas, and I've made some wonderful friends from the experience (some of whom are now colleagues). And in some ways the people I've met have been more valuable than anything I've learnt on it's own.

It's rough out there, but with the technology becoming more and more accessible, this is a great time to be entering the VFX world and other creative spaces. If you want to give 3D animation or modelling a go, I highly recommend downloading Blender 3D (it's free!) and messing around. In hindsight, the journey often winds up being more important than the finished result, so don't be afraid to be ambitious, because even if you don't get there 100%, you'll learn a tonne along the way.



Team Chrysalis



Chrysalis process



Doctor Strange in the multiverse of madness



Chrysalis still render Eyes discovery



Chrysalis still render Walking down the hill



Blackadam

# Anwyn Walker (nee McArthur) - AOGHS 1969-1973

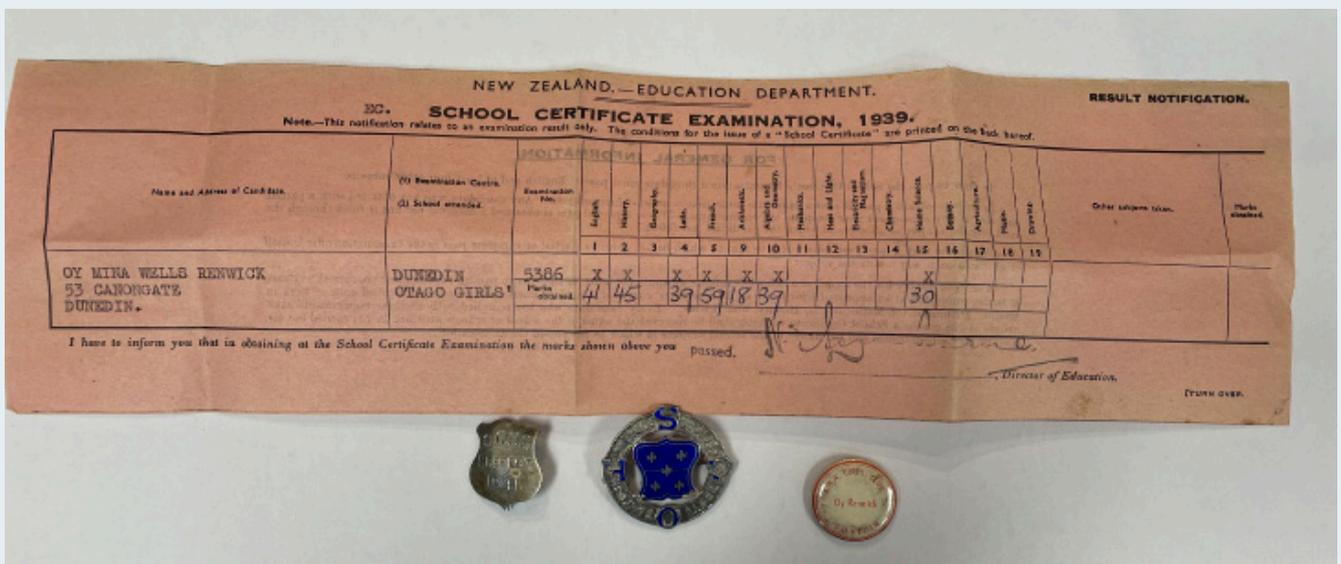
Anwyn visited the school recently to donate some of her ballet medals from when she was a student here at school. She also gave us her mother's School Certificate and some badges. We are very grateful for these donations to our archives.

Anwyn requested that her medals be repurposed and used for students in our prize giving at the end of the year. Our prizegiving coordinator was so excited when she saw them she has decided a trophy will be made with the medals fixed to it and each year the recipients of the Dean's Leadership Awards names will be engraved on it. This will be named the Anwyn Dean's Leadership Award.

Anwyn left school and became a teacher. She taught at Oamaru Intermediate then went on to teach at Breens and Medbury Intermediates in Christchurch. Following this she and her husband spent some time overseas before she returned to teach at Columba College. She taught there for 26 years before retiring two years ago.

Oy Renwick (Anwyn's mother) attended Otago Girls' from 1939-1941. Pictured here are her school certificate from 1939 and some of her badges.

We feel very privileged to have these treasures donated to us.



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