



Rosemary Sheehan & Gavan Martyn

Parents of Tim (OX 1996) and Nick (OX 2002)

Kostka Hall welcomed our son Tim Martyn and our family in 1990. Tim had to sit an entrance exam at the end of Grade 4 and we anxiously waited to see whether or not he would get a place! Fortunately, he did and so began a long association for us with Kostka, continued when our second son Nicholas commenced there in 1995. There was never any doubt that our boys would go to Kostka, their maternal great Uncle, Fr Frank Gorman SJ and Grandfather Michael Sheehan had been educated at St Patrick's East Melbourne, and the Society played an important role in their lives.

When Tim started at Kostka, Fr. Julian Slatterie SJ was the Principal, the Librarian was Anne Barber, who occupies still this important position. Peter Hawkins taught Latin, Margaret Howse was a much-admired English teacher, Malcolm Joseph taught Maths but was Tim's soccer coach, and their Year 8 team was victorious in their APS year level championships, a bit of a first for Kostka!

The school was inviting in its layout and grounds, it had a welcoming feel about it, and being smaller than the 'big' school, it was easy to get to know other boys and their families. The train station was close by so was easy to get to, no long tram or bus ride, just a walk across the oval to the classrooms! Past the elegant Marittima and Fr Slatterie's office and living quarters for the Jesuits at the school.

Brother McDonald SJ would be waiting every morning without fail to play basketball with boys when they arrived and were waiting for the bell to go. Then it was into 5/6/7/8 Red or Black until tuck shop time! If your mother was on duty, it meant you and your mates could get a few treats!

Life at the school revolved around the chapel and its magnificent stained-glass windows. Weekly Mass, Prize nights, music performances - all brought boys and their families together. During Nick's time, the gymnasium was built and became a centre of sport, music, drama, family events, the Night of the Notables being one that was a highlight for Year 8s.

By the time Nick started in 1995, new young teachers had arrived, Michael Jones and Jeremiah Mulcahy made Grades 5 and 6 very happy years for him. And music! In Year 8 he was able to give up his less than positive relationship with the oboe and move onto drums, which set him onto his life's profession as a musician!

Being a smaller school meant the teachers had a lot to do with the boys, from school excursions, camps, cricket on the front oval, soccer at the back, experiments in the science labs, Miss Barber getting in the latest books that boys wanted to read and providing places for them to sit and soak up adventures.

The boys were well prepared for their advance to the 'big school', being assured that their identity as a Kostka boy gave them a solid footing to manage all the differences they encountered at Xavier. The many lifelong friendships the boys formed stayed with them long after Kostka. Our family has kept its connection to Kostka, it plays an important role in our family's history and hearts, no more so than our son Tim's portrait hanging in the 'Men for Others' display at Kostka, remembering him as a Kostka boy, sadly died as a young man. The importance of Kostka to us shone through at this time when the school embraced us and remembered Tim, shaped by his school, and through his work for the UN, a man for others. Kostka Hall embodies what a school should be, and has continued to in its way thanks to Principal Kathleen Upfold, celebrating the achievements of young boys, forming them into intelligent, informed and giving young men, centred in Catholic faith and the need to 'give unto others'. We are thankful to be a 'Kostka family' and hope its uniqueness will be treasured for the future by the Xavier community.

