

Trevor John McCaskill

BEc(Syd), BEd(Melb), MA, MEd(Syd), ThL, MACE

6th Headmaster Barker College 1963 – 1986

Background

- Born in Wellington, New Zealand on 11 February 1927 and educated at Shore and the University of Sydney.
- Married Beth Chapman, a chemistry mistress at PLC Pymble in 1952.
- Four children - Anne, John (Class of 1974), Mary (Class of 1979), Margaret (Class of 1983), and grandchildren - Anthony (Class of 2018), Eloise (Class of 2015) and Lilian (Class of 2014).
- Began his career at Barker College from 1952-54, before teaching at The Kings School, Parramatta (1955-57; 1961-63) and Eton College, England (1958-60) before returning to Barker College as its 6th Headmaster from 1963-86.
- Became the sixth Headmaster of Barker College in September 1963 after the departure of John Gordon Dewes that same year.

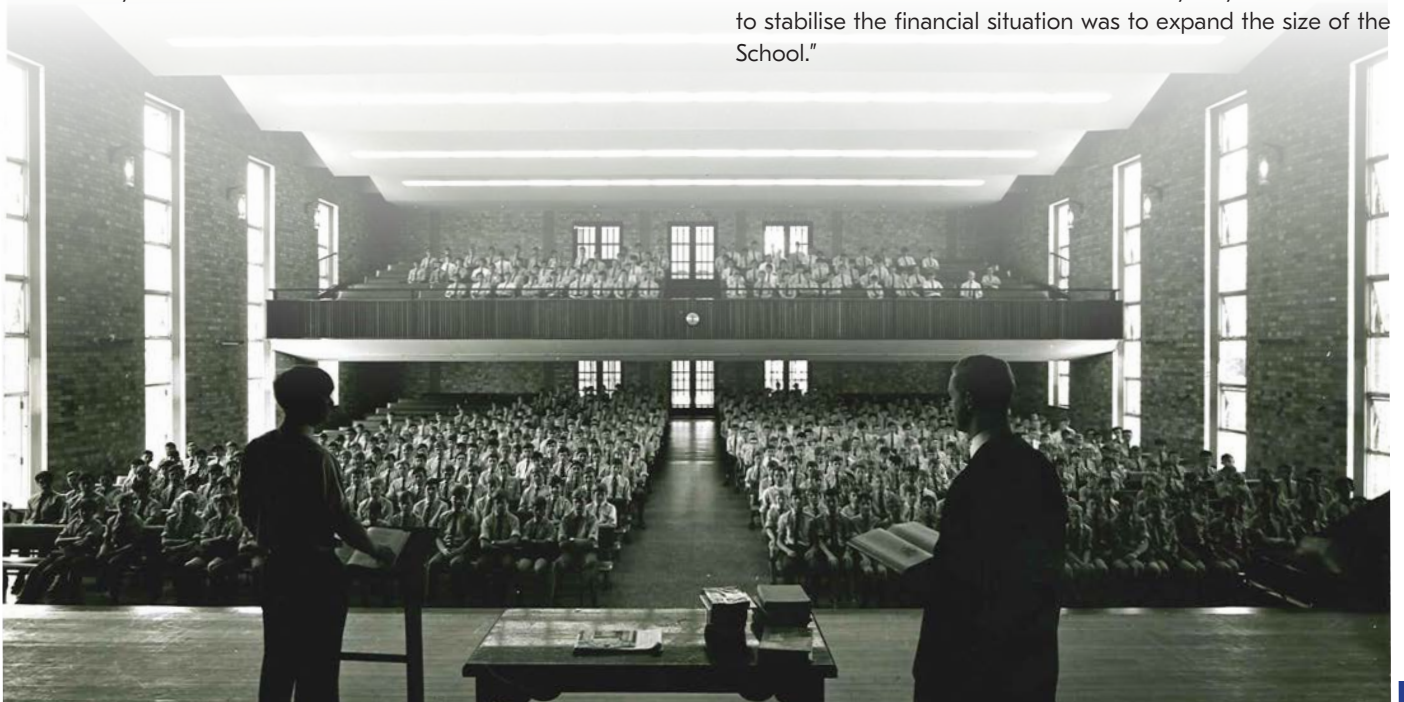


Christian Faith

- McCaskill saw the vocation of school mastering as very much a Christian ministry. He entered Moore Theological College, becoming senior student in 1951, placing first in Australia in the examination of the Licentiate of Theology.
- For a time he contemplated ordination with a view to becoming Assistant Chaplain at Barker, but became an Assistant Master instead.
- Regarding the significance of the Barker College Chapel he recalled "One can hardly go further than the lines written by Henry Newbolt in his poem on Clifton Chapel: ... "here, my son, Your father thought the thoughts of youth, And heard the words that one by one The Touch of life has turned to truth."

Turbulent Times

- McCaskill commenced his tenure at a turbulent time in the School's history, where demand for a more progressive and less authoritarian school was increasing.
- The School was also required to implement the changes from the 1957 Wyndham Report, which recommended sweeping changes to the education system, including a four-year secondary school education with a School Certificate, followed by a two-year Higher School Certificate course.
- While faced with the need to accommodate these changes the School was also dealing with financial difficulties. By 1962, Barker College had incurred losses for four years in a row, and the Council's Treasurer noted that "the only way he could see to stabilise the financial situation was to expand the size of the School."



Assembly in Leslie Hall 1966.

Expansion Program

- In 1965 the School celebrated the 75th anniversary of its foundation with the opening of Leslie Hall, of which Trevor McCaskill had been instrumental in its development.
- The second stage of the Science Building was completed in 1967 and in the 1950s the old Rosewood cottage was demolished, which created room for new playing fields in the late 1960s.
- In 1970 the new Headmaster's residence, named Kurrajong, was built on the eastern side of the Chapel, and in 1971 the Classroom Block (C Block) completed the quadrangle of buildings surrounding the outdoor swimming pool.
- The School's growth progressed with the assistance of the highly-motivated Barker College Council who supported numerous property acquisitions in The Avenue, Unwin Road, College Crescent and Clarke Road, securing land for future development.

Introduction of Coeducation and the Senior School

- It was McCaskill's inspiration that led Barker College to become the first independent school in Sydney to introduce coeducation. In 1973, the decision was made that the School was to become coeducational from fifth form level and that the fifth and sixth form students would be educated in separate facilities.
- Recognising that older adolescents had different needs to younger pupils, a new Senior School was also to be provided, where there was an increased emphasis on self-development and self-discipline, as well as a more informal relationship between students and staff.
- 1975 marked the beginning of the new Senior School and the introduction of coeducation and 59 girls were enrolled at Barker in Year 11 that year.
- The new Senior School Buildings and Gymnasium were completed by October 1976.
- In 1984 and 1985 the Junior School buildings underwent extensive refurbishments, and new Science laboratories were built in the Senior School.

Growth of Barker

- Like his predecessors, Carter and Leslie, McCaskill had a great vision for the School and in his 23 years as Headmaster, the School doubled in size from 660 students in 1963 to 1400 students in 1986.
- In 1987, the McCaskill Music Centre was officially opened, and provided new facilities for Junior and Senior School Music students.

Legacy

- Introduction of coeducation and a separate Senior School.
- Facilities opened under his tenure: Leslie Hall, Senior School buildings including C Block and Gamson Centre, Science Block, Headmaster's Residence, Rosewood Playing Fields.
- Named in his family's honour: McCaskill Music Centre & Beth McCaskill Garden, Rhodes Theatre - recognising John McCaskill as a Rhodes Scholar.

Photo top to bottom Trevor McCaskill with members of Council looking at Drawings of the New Senior School 1975; Trevor McCaskill addressing the audience at the public signing of the building contract for Leslie Hall 1964; Headmaster McCaskill at his desk 1985; Rod Kefford, Marj Binns, Chris Strong and Trevor McCaskill at the 30 Years of Coeducation Event 2006; Staff appointed by Trevor McCaskill gathered during a visit to the School in 2013.

