

# Scholars, scholarships and social justice



## Undergraduate scholarships recently endowed by the Sisters of Mercy in Brisbane support the role of education at ACU National in the quest for social justice.

Sister Anne Hetherington RSM was a pupil at All Hallows School in Brisbane when the first two students enrolled at Catherine McAuley College of Teacher Education at All Hallows Sisters of Mercy Convent in 1955.

Sister Anne has watched with an active interest the growth of the College and its moves to Dutton Park, Mitchelton and Banyo, where, as ACU National's Brisbane Campus (McAuley at Banyo) it now caters for more than 3,000 students, of arts, business, education, information systems, nursing, psychology, social science and theology.

Sister Anne said she was pleased to see "the whole idea of justice, concern for the poor and underprivileged" continue to permeate the growing curriculum. Sister

Anne was a member of the Queensland Chapter of ACU National for many years, is a current University Company member, and Sisters of Mercy Brisbane Congregation bursar and member of the Congregation leadership team.

"In 1955, the Principal was Sister Mary Julius Christ," Sister Anne said. "Mother Damian Duncombe was the driving force behind the College. They went to great lengths to ensure that the sisters received the highest standard of training.

"The two students were Sister Enid Ryall and the late Sister Miriam McShane. It grew from there." Franciscan, Holy Spirit and Presentation Sisters also came to McAuley to study teaching.

Lay students were enrolled from 1973, and the College moved to Dutton Park, and then Mitchelton where tertiary training for nurses was introduced. In 1991, McAuley joined Catholic Colleges in Sydney, Canberra, and Victoria to become the Australian Catholic University.

The Brisbane Campus (McAuley at Banyo) commenced in 2003, replacing the former

Brisbane Campus at Mitchelton. The current 40-hectare site was formerly the Pius XII Provincial Seminary, with a history extending back to 1863.

The Sisters of Mercy Brisbane Congregation retain an active involvement in the University, recently endowing a substantial scholarship fund, the Catherine McAuley Scholarships, to continue and honour the work of their sisters.

"The sisters have continued to be involved with the University at various levels throughout the last 50 years, including providing teaching, administration and pastoral support," Sisters of Mercy Brisbane Congregation Leader, Sister Sandra Lupi said.

"The Sisters of Mercy have focused their work in education, health and welfare, and I am pleased that the work begun in 1955 will be perpetuated through the Catherine McAuley Scholarships."

The scholarships, for students who can demonstrate their commitment to and leadership in the academic and professional areas of business, education,

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health and social welfare, are open to prospective undergraduate students from Indigenous cultures, from socially and economically disadvantaged areas and from rural and regional areas.

ACU National Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Sheehan AO said the Sisters of Mercy value the significant role education plays in the development and continuance of a truly just society, as demonstrated through their outstanding contribution to Australian society since their arrival in Australia in 1846.

Australian Sisters of Mercy draw their inspiration from their Irish foundress, Catherine McAuley, who showed mercy, compassion and justice in her life's work, recognising the needs of the poor and the marginalised, and in 1827 setting up a house of Mercy to educate women and the poor of Dublin, before founding the Sisters of Mercy in 1831.

**Far left:** Mercy Sisters learning art teaching skills in the 1960s; Sister Nuala Doyle RSM (left), with former McAuley College staff member and former Brisbane Congregation Leader Sister Kath Burke RSM, a foundation student of McAuley College Sister Enid Ryall RSM, and Sister Angela Mary Doyle RSM celebrating the 50th anniversary of McAuley College; Sisters of Mercy Brisbane Congregation Leader Sister Sandra Lupi; Sister Anne Hetherington RSM; and ACU National Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor John O'Gorman (left) with Archbishop John Bathersby of Brisbane; Professor Mary Sheehan, for the Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Sheehan AO; and Queensland Irish Association president Eamon Gaffney, at the 50th anniversary celebrations

The Presentation Sisters of Queensland have also committed to supporting the development of leadership skills, by endowing a bursary fund to support suitably qualified Indigenous students pursuing postgraduate studies at ACU National.

The Presentation Sisters recognise the human dignity of each person and are determined to address the wrongs which oppress and deny the human spirit.

In recent years they have become aware of the injustices perpetrated against the traditional owners of the land, and continue to be involved in the Aboriginal reconciliation process and to appreciate and learn from Indigenous spirituality, culture and history.