



SAINT KENTIGERN

College Academic Prizegiving 2020.

Speech by Mr Russell Brooke, College Principal.

Good afternoon students, guests, ladies and gentlemen. Thank for joining us this today as we come together as a school for the final time in 2020.

2020 has been a pivotal year for Saint Kentigern College driven by two key areas – new Senior Leadership Team, including me. And the learning we have embraced as a result of the challenges of lockdowns. If we pause and reflect on those two aspects, and consider in relationship to the journey of the school over recent years, then I hope you will be in agreement when I say how proud I am of what you all have achieved this year: students, Teachers, parents and Board.

From a personal point of view, I give a heartfelt thank you. And as I say that to you all I recognise that in the pace of this year there will be things I have missed, not paid enough attention to, or perhaps not appreciating deeply enough some aspect of Saint Kentigern culture. I acknowledge this.

At this juncture I also recognise that our Board has changed its makeup over the year as well. School, can I say to you as someone who has now spent quite some time in school leadership... you have a Board that is absolutely committed to doing the best for you and for seeking to provide outstanding education for our students. From us all, can I thank the Board for your love, care and passion for our school.

Room 8 is an English room just up the stairs from the Elliot Hall entrance. On the outside wall next to the door is written a quote. There are quotes and sayings all through this corridor. But this one jumped out at me the first time I wandered through the school. Can you recall what it says?

Be not afraid of growing slowly,

Be afraid of standing still.

Nothing could better describe our position at this time. We are a proud school, building a fine tradition. We have weathered storms which serve to make us stronger. 2020 has been a reset year for us, and as per that quote, we now face the excitement of continuing our journey. Things will not necessarily stay the same as before – they cannot because we are

in different times. But this should not cause us to worry. What is important is that we understand what we do and why we do it. What it is that is special about Saint Kentigern. We take the best of our past and combine it with the excitement of the future and slowly and steadily we move forward.

As we move forward, we will increasingly focus on setting our students up for successful futures. What students need are pathways into their future, doors to be opened, skill sets and character to enable success, and courses in school which lead to a pathway. We are calling this **Future Me** and it will be the key theme for our school moving forwards.

Students, as we work on Future Me, we are identifying the features of what we hope you will all have when you leave school. These are written so that you own them:

- My Learning
- My Skills
- My Future Pathway
- My Well being
- My wider interests
- My character

We are listening to what employers and universities are saying that students of tomorrow should have and are now working across all our schools to refine this list and unpack the detail.

We will be increasing the opportunities for you to improve yourselves – for you to take responsibility for your own learning CV. **In 2021 these academies will commence:**

- AUT Academy of Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Whitecliffe Academy of Fashion and Textiles
- Ardmore Flying Academy
- Scholars Academies
- Drama Academy
- Music Academy
- Dance Academy
- Construction Academy
- Hospitality Academy

A further aspect of Future Me is the creation of Student Futures in the Goodfellow Centre under the leadership of Hannah Williams. I know that many of you have utilised their services this year and judging by the lovely emails and comments I have received, their work is being valued. Increasingly their presence will be across all we do – from checking that our

courses provide appropriate pathways, to encouraging, or should I say expecting that all students are involved in co-curricular and not just in one area.

So successful has their work been this year that later on we will be acknowledging an outstanding \$700,500 of University Scholarships to New Zealand and International Universities. 59 scholarships to 52 students. We still have some scholarship results to come, such as those from the northern hemisphere universities and private firms. Lastly one of our students is through to the second round for the John Drake Memorial Scholarship

This reflects a truly holistic school that values the academic at its heart.

We endeavour to acknowledge success at our assemblies. This year one group has missed out on that opportunity due to a very recent success. Please could I invite the Theatresports team to join me on stage.

The Auckland Theatresports Youth Program involves 22 Colleges from across Auckland. This year Saint Kentigern's Premiere side, "Peter's Angels"; Peter Wallace (captain), Danielle Mayer, Carlos Stone and Arwyn Stevens became 2020 Auckland Theatresports Champions, defeating; Kelston Boys High, Northcote College and Auckland Grammar in the final." Carlos and Peter will be collecting on behalf of the team as Arwyn and Danielle are in exams.

Congratulations!

2020 perhaps more than any has felt like a blink of an eyelid. That it has been so smooth and powered up is testament to an exceptional College Senior Leadership Team. Thank you for your skill, and perhaps more importantly, your spirit.

In close relation to that I especially want to thank our Student Leaders, Will, Lulu, Olivia and Hayden for all your work this year. If ever there was a year in which we needed strong student leadership this was it. I am humbled by the trust you placed in me, and the support you gave me. Thank you.

I also want to thank David Hodge and my fellow Principals Nikki Joyce, Peter Cassie, Juliet Small for your support, laughter, and for the sense of excitement and connection as we go forwards. It is rare in education to be part of such a powerful team.

Students, whilst today's ceremony is about celebrating your success, I know that you greatly appreciate your Teachers, coaches and support staff. Time and time again when I ask students what makes our school special, the reply is their Teachers. And seldom can they identify a single favourite. Please will you all join me in thanking our amazing staff.

And can I pay the final tribute to you our students. At my first assembly with you I said I would reflect back what I saw. I have seen from you humour, pride, respect, work ethic, leadership, oratory excellence, faith, trust, spirit, approachability, sharing, real talk, openness, commitment, courage. Not 100% by everyone, but by most. We will work together to make this 100%. I hope you have felt my desire to be open with you. To listen and to explain. To help our school be a place you can call home.

I would like to give one example of the shining of a school value. This was in between the lockdowns. I returned to my office to find sitting on my desk a little bag with a face mask in. On the front was written "made with love, from J---- x. That one little gesture made me smile and charged my battery. I know that so many of us have experienced these things... what I could call the Saint Kentigern heart.

To all the students and staff that leave us we wish you all the very best in your futures.

Students - please stay in touch, join our alumni, and share your successes and journeys with us. We are proud of you!

Parents, thank you for believing in Saint Kentigern and for your support of our journey and what we do.

All the best for the holidays. Look after each other, and for those of you that celebrate Christmas, I wish you a very merry one.

We will keep the faith.

Fides servanda est.