

JUNIOR SCHOOLING THANKSGIVING NIGHT ADDRESS

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE COLLEGE BOARD, REVEREND DR MALCOLM MCARTHUR

NOVEMBER 2008

1. My favourite book about teaching is The Idiot Teacher. Teddy O'Neill's school had walls decorated with slogans. One was-- "Take care of the children and the adults will take care of themselves!" That is a reflection of the first of three messages from the Board tonight; CHILDREN COME FIRST.

Pedare has a reputation for pastoral care and this junior school exemplifies that. We are especially appreciative of all parent-teacher partnerships, for instance of the wonderful efforts of the Friends of Music here this year. What year 5's can do musically amazes me, (I just wish I could have had such opportunities too!) At another school this week I was, first, encouraged by what the year five band could do and then thrilled when, a little later, the Senior School Gold medal winning band showed what those efforts could turn into just five or six years on. It's great to see your new building but even greater to see what you students can do.

Teddy O'Neill's classrooms had another motto: "Are you dead but not buried, don't lie down with a jam jar and dead flowers on top of you!" Thanks for not doing that.

2. Some years back we visited a neighbouring school to see if our daughter should transfer. The grey classroom walls were so drear that we decided it did not stand for much. I love the liveliness of your teachers' walls. The values you hold are clear from what is there. The second board message is : PEDARE'S CHRISTIAN VALUES WILL HOLD

Your part in this is illustrated by your wonderful Easter Event. I remember on four years back; the acting out of the Easter-week events among the lavender of the sunken garden; the sight of two tiny preps in gum boots and blue jackets leading files of students back up the oval bank past three empty crosses to classroom de-briefings. Teddy O'Neill had a motto about values:

What's it feel like to be educated? It is to want to do things, to be able to will yourself to do what you want; to have personality; to have character; To love God and damn all evil!"

3. We are facing changing financial times which will have some of you, as well as school boards cautious about the future. The Board's message, in these circumstances is still that, though prudent, WE WILL BE BOLD. Remember Winnie the Pooh? A bear so hungry for honey he was likely to get his head firmly wedged in the honey jar. Remember how, stuck just like that one day he was feeling his way through the Five Acre wood when he tumbled into a hole that had been dug to trap elephants? What was Piglet's response when he saw that great galumphing brown shape roaring in the pit: He fled screaming;

"a hoff a hoff a hoffable hellalump" and so on.

As kids we are sometimes scared of the unknown, so are we when parents or teachers. But we will help each other to BE BOLD!

Here's a last jingle :-"sometimes my courage shrinks so small We wonder if it's there at all, But then when there's a real demand:----- it stretches like a rubber band!"

Let us be bold.