



History

In 1895, the Sisters of the Society of the Sacred Advent opened a boarding school for girls at Nundah in a former boys' school, Eton High School. Sister Emma was the Sister-in-Charge and Miss Isabelle Caine was the Headmistress. In 1907, the school moved to Toorak House in Hamilton; Miss Juliet Lyon (1907 -1917) replaced Miss Caine and the school roll had grown to 35 pupils. As well as the usual lessons, students participated in tennis, rowing, basketball and swimming.

Three years later, the school moved again to Albion Heights. Its new home was Donatello, built in the 1880s for Patrick Durack. It was renamed St Margaret's House and the school's name changed to the Church of England High School. Two years later, the school became known as St Margaret's Church of England Girls' School and has remained on this site ever since. Donatello was, until recently, in use as the Community House for the Sisters.

By 1910, there were 47 boarders. When The University of Queensland opened in 1911, two St Margaret's girls were among its first students. Miss Lyon resigned in 1917 and was the last lay headmistress until 1978. It was during Miss Lyon's time that the School Motto, *Per Volar Sunata - Born to Fly Upwards* - came into being and the distinctive Middy uniform was introduced.

Under the leadership of Sister Teresa (1918-25), the school grew rapidly and the adjoining property, Avoca, was acquired in 1918 to provide extra accommodation. It was originally named Mooloomburram when it was built in 1886 by Andrew Petrie. By 1925, Sister Teresa had made St Margaret's a leading school in Brisbane, with a good record of academic achievement. She had introduced the house system, a student representative school council, and the innovative Dalton method of education.

Sister Elisabeth (1925-1940) embarked on a building program which saw the construction of many of the buildings still standing today – West Wing with classrooms, dormitories and dining room; the Darnell Art and Music buildings and the 25m swimming pool. These additions were made despite the difficult conditions of the Depression and exemplify the Sisters' faith in the St Margaret's of the future.

Sister Mary (1940-1964) guided the school through the years of World War II and the profound changes to school life – closures, reduced enrolments, rationing and shortages. After the war, her vision resulted in further expansion – a new assembly hall (Eton Hall), extra classrooms and dormitories in East Wing; a gymnasium; the School Chapel; Dalhousie classrooms and a boarders' recreation block and library. The school continued to grow under the leadership of both Sister Jean-Marie (1965-1970) and Sister Helen (1971-1977), maintaining the SSA's traditional high standards of education and spiritual growth.

In 1977, the Sisters took the decision to appoint a lay headmistress, while still retaining ownership and guidance of the school. Mrs Margaret Kugleman (1978-1982) was followed by Miss Evelyn Heath (1982-1993), Mrs Mary Hutchings (1993-1995) and Mrs Judith Hill (1995-1996). To accommodate the growing number of students and the diversity in curricular and extra-curricular activities during this time, the Avoca and Jackson Wings were built, providing both general and specialist classrooms.

In 1995, the school's centenary year, the Philip Harris Sports Centre was built to support an extensive range of sporting activities. It is supplemented by outdoor facilities at Windsor Park and a rowing centre at Breakfast Creek, enabling students to participate in a wide range of sporting activities. Cultural pursuits have always been an integral part of life at St Margaret's. An art room and music block were among the first buildings constructed in the 1930s, thanks to bequest from the estate of John Darnell. In 2003 a new Arts Centre was built to further foster students' creative talents.

Mrs Vicki Waters (1997-2006), Dr Sue Simon (2007-2010) and Mrs Karen Spiller (Acting Principal, 2010) continued to support the school's stated values of spirit, faith, integrity, courage, respect and passion. Under their leadership, and with the guidance of the Sisters of The Society of the Sacred Advent, the school maintained its high academic standards.

Current Principal Ms Ros Curtis has led the school through a period of growth in enrolments in both the primary and secondary schools, as well as a school improvement program which has seen the addition of significant green space and outdoor shaded areas for students to enjoy, a state of the art collaborative lecture theatre, a dedicated Year 7 precinct as well as a new residential wing for our youngest boarders. Ms Curtis has been pivotal to the success of the recent Capital Campaign which has raised over \$1M to support the school's latest and most significant building program in recent history - the new sports precinct to be opened in July 2020 in the school's 125th year.

Timeline 1895 - 2020

Please enjoy these images from the school's archives across the decades.

[View galleries](#)