

Chapter 3

1979 - 2002

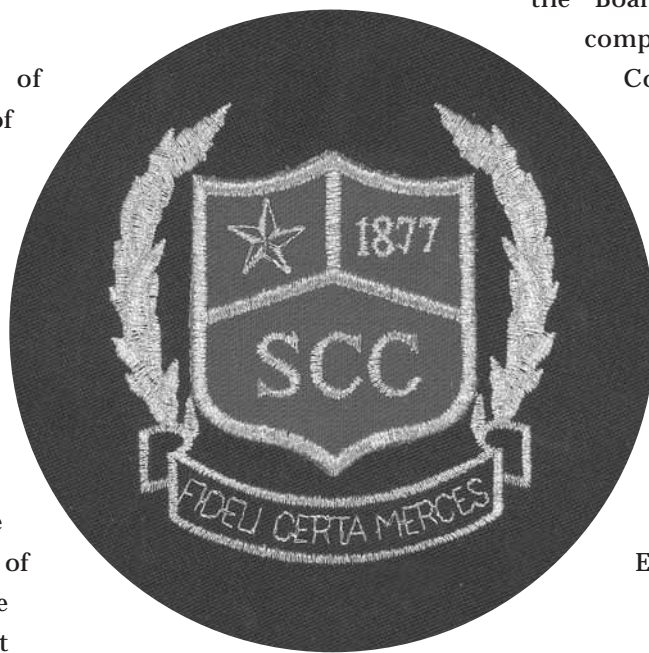
A renaissance

1979 - 1991

The enormous flurry of activity at the end of 1978, after the departure of the three Brothers, continued on through December and into January of 1979. Of considerable importance to the Board of the College was the badge and uniform for the boys, as well as the Constitution of the Board of Governors, and a whole host of things which went towards the day-to-day management of the School.

1979

The Constitution of the Board of Governors was rewritten to make provision for the involvement of the Old Boys. For the first time in the history of the College, the Old Boys were directly involved in the management of their



ABOVE 1979 *The St Charles College crest. The star represents the Marist history of the College (being one of the 12 stars which crowned the head of the Virgin Mary, referred to in the Revelation of John XII:i). The numbers 1877 refer to then accepted starting date of the College. The letters SCC are self-explanatory.*

FACING PAGE 1979 *All the Grade i and ii boys at the beginning of their schooling at St Charles, preparing for an Easter-egg hunt. From the left are: Lawrence Smith, Alfredo Mendes, Reggie van Selm, Byron Dillon and Andrew Dickason. Only Andrew went on to complete Matric at the College.*

School – in addition to the position the Chairman of the Old Boys' Association held, *ex officio*, on the Board. This was to give a completely new face to the College. Although not a requirement that the Board Chairman be an Old Boy, the first Chairman was, inevitably, Old Boy, Des White.

The Catholic face of St Charles was changed to an 'educational institution which shall effectively provide an essentially Christian Education'. Thus the term "inter-denominational" came into use at the College.

The Board had written to a number of the Staff in October 1978 offering them jobs in 1979, and asked them to stay on at the College.

Also in October 1978, retired former Headmaster, and Natal (Teachers') Training College Rector, Mr NW "Wynne" Bowden, was

appointed as Headmaster of St Charles College.

Wynne Bowden had been President of the Natal Teachers' Society. He had been a sports administrator, subject examiner and moderator in school academic matters, a teacher at Durban High School (D.H.S.), Vice-Principal at Northlands High School, and Principal of the new Westville High School. After very successfully starting Westville from scratch, in the face of considerable questioning from the Westville parents' community, he was made Rector of the primary teachers' Natal Training College in Pietermaritzburg, where amongst much else, he attended to getting as many suitable male teachers into primary education as he could.

If anyone understood education, if anyone understood the male psyche, it was the 72-year-old



ABOVE 1979 – 1983
Mr NW "Wynne" Bowden

Wynne Bowden who stood in front of the 136 boys of St Charles College in January 1979 to be introduced to them by Mr Des White.

It was the small number of boys at the College that struck everyone. It was, nevertheless, the beginning of a long haul in the hands of a dedicated educationalist as Headmaster, a group of seriously committed teachers and boys, the Old Boys and the Board of Governors.

The College's blazer was significantly altered – just plain navy blue, with a simple badge which had been the product of lengthy Board discussions. Grey longs, black shoes, a pale blue shirt and navy with a gold stripe tie (see page 214) was the new outfit for the boys.

If the tenacious spirit of St Charles College had been legendary in the past, that was merely a

BELOW 1979 Senior swimming team with Mrs Kate Herselman (left) and Miss Sally Lewis (later Mrs Shone)(right) in the front row. The striped blazer had gone as was the Marist "M" from the badge. Board members sons Peter Stewart (top left) and Shaun Quin (back row, third from left) are part of this team captained by Johnny Clarke, Head Boy the following year.





ABOVE 1979 Second XI with Mr Steve Shone. In this photo, some of the boys are as young as U13 playing at this level.

foretaste of what was to follow. In a School which had just enough boys to draw on for various sports teams, a huge spirit to succeed developed at the College. This was felt particularly strongly by the boys and there was no better person to channel it into determined action than the dedicated Wynne Bowden.

The Prep School, which ranged from Class i to Std 6 was headed by Mr John Richards, with Mrs Anna Shaw in charge of the Junior Primary section. There were just 50 boys in the whole Prep School, and 133 in the High School – a total of 183.

Douglas Dalton was Head Boy. Shaun Quin, son of Board member and Old Boy (1954) Mike Quin (d. 1998) (Shaun's mother was daughter of St Charles Soccer Springbok, Tommy Mitchell), recalls that in 1979...

I was in Std VI. The classes were very small. Competition was really tough. Everybody had to play. In team sports we battled a lot. In 1983 we were readmitted to First Division Rugby. We held our own, but got a few hidings. Wynne Bowden was a very good Headmaster. He set the foundation for the new St

Charles. He fixed the discipline. Previously, no one was interested. The boys loved him. He was one of the people who disciplined you and you loved him for it. He was always very fair. He showed a lot of interest in the boys. This went through to the masters. The masters became a lot stricter. He showed a lot of interest. He'd see you on the rugby field, and he'd want to know how you were doing. He had to make the school work. If you achieved in any sport, he'd let you know how pleased he was. He communicated with you. There was a big change. You knew there was a Headmaster. This meant that we knew there was discipline. The boys accepted it. There was huge difference between 1978 and 1979.

We were introduced to him at the first assembly. There was the new badge and it was a pleasure to get rid of the stripes on the blazer. He said that we had a huge challenge and he needed all the boys' co-operation. Everybody that stayed on at St Charles in 1979 gave everything they had – perhaps not always in the classroom, but definitely on the sportsfield. I was U13 and I was in the First XI. In my first game, against Voortrekker, I was put in to bat at number 3. The camaraderie was fantastic.

The Dux of the School for 1979 was Guy Pansegrauw, later a member of the Board.

1980

There was undoubtedly confidence in the abilities of Wynne Bowden. The number at the College jumped from 183 in 1979 to 226 – a 23% growth (Prep: 66, Seniors: 160). In spite of the growth, the Junior Primary numbers were still too small to be viable and so, at the beginning of the year, the small boys moved up Harwin Road to be housed with and by the St John's D.S.G. Junior Primary School. With Mrs Anna Shaw as Head of the St Charles J.P., she was fiercely protective of her boys, seeing that they maintained their St Charles-ness at all times. At that stage, Mr Wessel Dirksen was Business Manager at St John's and was always fiercely protective of the St John's interests. With things as fierce as this, whilst respecting each other, he and Anna occasionally



BELOW 1980 *Some of the boys who kept basketball alive at the College in the years when there were precious few boys to go round – when everybody had to turn out for the College and the team. The coach is Mr Andy Andriessen.*

TOP c.1978 *John Richards.* ABOVE 1981 *The memorial plaque to John Richards in the St Charles College Chapel.*

