

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

NADINE WOOD

CLASS OF 2009

When did you attend Lowanna College?

I started Year 7 in 2004 and graduated Year 12 in 2009.

Was there anyone at Lowanna College who had a positive impact and upon reflection, influenced you to follow the path you have chosen?

There are too many teachers to mention but I was certainly privileged enough to have some amazing English teachers throughout my high school experience and they definitely played a huge role in fostering my love of reading and analysing.

My Year 7 and 8 Humanities teacher, Mr. Van Breugel, challenged me to consider how written texts can reflect and explore the human experience. Whilst Miss. Sheahey pushed me to question how language can manipulate and persuade in Year 9 English, and on a more personal note, looked out for

me during a very tough year socially when I struggled to fit in.

Then there were my two Year 12 teachers, Mrs. Ryan and Mrs. Cole, whom I largely attribute much of my passion for Literature and teaching. These two women inspired and challenged me daily. I still fondly remember analysing "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" in Literature and dissecting how it challenges stereotypical gender roles in popular culture, which helped me to develop the skills of literary criticism that I would later require at University. Whereas, in Mrs. Cole's class, my strongest memory is of the rich discussion we had about the set texts; "The Crucible" and "1984", where she pushed me to dig deeper and consider the complexities of these texts. I have since gone on to teach both of these in my own classroom and draw on the core ideas that we discussed long ago.



What did you do after leaving Lowanna College, and where are you now?

I was fortunate enough to receive a scholarship to Monash University and completed a Bachelor of Arts, with a major in History and Politics, and a minor in Communications, at the Gippsland Campus. I then went on to complete a Diploma of Secondary Education at Monash, Clayton Campus.

Over the last 5 years I have been teaching VCE English and Literature at Sale College and more recently this year I have taken on a leadership role at the school. I am now the College's Literacy Learning Specialist and am basically leading and overseeing a whole school approach to teaching literacy in a bid to improve the school's overall literacy levels.

What are your greatest accomplishments (list any awards, achievements, defining moments etc.)?

In Year 12 I was awarded Dux of my year, with an ATAR of 98.15, which I am still incredibly proud of because I worked extremely hard for it.

At University I consistently received excellent results and therefore, was invited to join the Golden Key International Honour Society an internationally recognised and exclusive society for academics.

In the workforce I have had a number of defining moments. For the last 3 years my Year 12 students have received the top study scores in English and I have motivated and nurtured a number of extremely low students successfully through their VCE. But equally significant is



the relationships I have developed with my students and how lovely it is to keep in touch with them after school, to hear and celebrate their successes and know that I played a part in helping them get there. I am also extremely honoured to have the opportunity to be a part of real change at Sale College and help implement and develop a stronger literacy focus within the school.

Outside of work I would have to say the most defining experience I have had, was last year when I travelled Europe by myself for three months. I met new people, got to experience different cultures and actually see so many places I had read about. I also learnt a lot about myself and developed a greater independence and confidence because of it.

What advice would you like to give any of our current Lowanna College students?

I would like to say be proud of where you come from and embrace the experience of high school for what it is. I learnt so much from the other students I mixed with and developed a greater resilience because of it. I am a firm believer that education is for everyone and it is because of this that I have stayed in the public education system.

I would also like to stress how important hard work is, as someone who isn't naturally brainy and who has had to work extremely hard to get where I am – I just want to say that it is worth it and I have no regrets!

And lastly, do something in life that you are passionate about. I always tell my students not to fall into the trap of choosing subjects



that get marked up or the ones you think will make you look good. Instead choose the ones that you enjoy and you will do well in them because of it. After all I did Studio Art and got a 50 that certainly silenced those who said it was an easy option. Likewise, I know some people who dread going to work and whilst I have bad days too, I can honestly say I love my job and find it very rewarding.

