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DECEMBER 2017



Alumni Newsletter

WG HS

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Welcome to new graduates from the Westlake Class of 2017. Good luck to you all as you wait for the exam results in January and plan your next steps.

It was good to hear about the many interesting options coming up in 2018 at the Year 13 Leavers' function.

Thanks to all our former students who have engaged with Westlake in some way over the year, whether through our social media links, passing on old yearbooks or photos, and in particular those who extended their messages of support to the Westlake families affected by the serious traffic accident outside Westlake in September.

In the final newsletter of the year we catch up with some of our former students with musical successes, academic scholarships and book launches, and others who have returned to Westlake as guest speakers and alumni gatherings.

We also acknowledge a long-serving staff member who is retiring after 40 years' service.



Alumni Community

What's new?

There is a new Facebook group for the Class of 2017 Westlake Girls

Many of our new graduates have joined this now so thanks to those Year 13 students who have helped in this process.

[Class of 2017 Westlake Girls](#) Please let those who left before this year know about the group.



All Facebook groups

Join the alumni Facebook Group for your year.

It's the Year 13 / Form 7 year for your cohort, regardless of whether you left school before that final year. (So if you started in 1984 in Form 3, you would be the Class of 1988).

All links are at the end of the newsletter. Please encourage others as well.

Archives

Your help in keeping and sending through any photos or memorabilia is always appreciated.

alumni@westlakegirls.school.nz

Westlake's principals

These photos of previous principals of Westlake Girls have recently been hung in the Gernhoefer Administration Centre: Mr W H (Harvey) Thomson 1957-1961 (Westlake High School), Miss Sylvia Mollard 1962-1968, Miss Helen Ryburn 1969-1981, Mrs Alison Gernhoefer 1982-2011, Ms Roz Mexted 2011-2016.



Events

Recent events

Westlake Amnesty Alumni function: *Wonder Girls* book launch



We loved having many of our former students from Amnesty Groups back to celebrate the launch of the book, *Wonder Girls: Changing our World*, by renowned American photo-journalist Paola Gianturco. This new publication has a chapter on our Amnesty International Group of 2015, the only youth activist group from Oceania featured in the book. The Westlake Amnesty International group is the largest in NZ.

Our launch function was a collaboration between the Social Sciences department and the Alumni Association, past and current students.

A highlight was a video calling with the author who had just finished promoting the book at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle.



Thanks to those former students who were able to join us at a busy time of the year and also to those others who we have re-connected with in NZ and overseas as we researched and prepared for the function. We were delighted to welcome back **Dr Pam Laird**, former HOD English, who was an instigator of the earliest Peace and Women's Consciousness groups at Westlake, The late Mr Graeme Keall also supported the school's early activist groups.

[Further information on *Wonder Girls*](#), all the author's royalties go to the Global Fund for Women.

The Class of '97 held a very successful 20th reunion party in late October with over 60 former students getting together again. Many others, unable to get along that evening, have re-connected through Facebook during the year, and were also able to be part of the social evening with live streaming of the function.



Many thanks to the organising committee **Jasmine Platt, Rebecca Longhurst** and **Vanessa Kay**, and everyone from the year group who provided help through the months of planning.

This group of former students have also set up a *Grief Support Group* from their alumni year that has been active in supporting former classmates at times of family or personal crisis. Thanks to those who have become involved in their Westlake community again by helping in this thoughtful and impressive way.

Alumni gatherings 2018

There are no details of gatherings at this stage but we hope to engage with our alumni as opportunities arise during the year.

The **Westlake High School co-ed founders** hope to meet *every 2 years* so the next one will be **2019**.

Decade gatherings

If there are any former students interested in having a decade reunion next year, from the classes of '68, '78, '88, '98, or '08 please get in touch. I am happy to assist if there are one or two interested in getting planning underway. This can just be as simple as a small group wanting to have a coffee and a look around the old school to something on a larger scale. Ideas and suggestions are welcome.

alumni@westlakegirls.school.nz

Alumni Updates

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Congratulations to former student **Natasha Wilson**, Class of 2011, who won the Dame Malvina Major Dunedin Aria Competition in October 2017.

A group of former Westlake music students and teachers were in the choir when Rowan Johnston, conductor of our Choralation choir, had his MMUS Conducting Recital in November 2017.



Morag Atchison, Fiona Wilson, Rowan Johnston, Te Ohore Williams, Luana Pricor, Dilys Fong with 3 Westlakers from Westlake Boys.

Academic Scholarship



Congratulations to **Litia Tuiburelevu**, 2012, on receiving the Auckland University Moana Schwalger Law Scholarship (\$10,000).

Tia was Dux in her final year at Westlake and has been involved in UN Youth NZ and the Pacific Island Law Students Association as well as representing NZ in karate 2010-2016.

[More from the NZ Herald](#)

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Former Westlake students have had great success in being awarded a prestigious research fellowship - the Rutherford Discovery Fellowship. This is the third successive year that a Westlaker has received a Fellowship which supports research for a 5-year term.

2015, Dr Emma Scotter (Daniel), Class of 1999, for research into motor neurone disease

2016, Dr Nicole Roughan, Class of 1999 for legal research

And in 2017, **Dr Yvette Perrott**, Class of 2003, astrophysicist, has received a Fellowship for her project *Realising the potential of galaxy clusters as cosmological probes*. Yvette has been at the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge University and will be based at Victoria University.



2015 Fellow



2017 Fellow

To read our previous features on Emma (left) and Yvette (right)

[Alumni Newsletter August 2014](#)

Dr Nicole Roughan, Class of '99
Rutherford Discovery Fellow 2016



Dr Nicole Roughan is currently based in Singapore where she is Associate Professor and Deputy Director of the Centre of Legal Theory at the National University of Singapore (NUS), Faculty of Law.

She was awarded a Rutherford Discovery Fellowship at the end of 2016 which she will take up from January 2018. Her research field is the philosophy of law and her major research is '*Jurisprudence without borders*' which considers interacting legal systems in an international and NZ context. She is returning to NZ in December 2017 as Associate Professor in the Law Faculty at the University of Auckland.

Nicole was Head Girl and Dux in her final year at Westlake and was very involved in Westlake music throughout her schooling.

I have wonderful memories of my time at Westlake, which gave me chances to pursue many different passions, especially in music and debating (I think I was even in netball team 100 or

the opportunities that came later, especially those who gave up their own time to run extra-curricular activities.

Nicole's post Westlake studies were at the University of Auckland, Victoria University, (NZ Law Foundation Ethel Benjamin Award), and Yale Law School (Fulbright Scholarship) for her LLM and Doctorate. She had academic appointments at the University of Kent in Brussels and Cambridge University prior to moving to Singapore in 2013.

Nicole is involved in a number of collaborative and individual academic projects. Her first book 'Authorities' was published by Oxford University Press in 2013. Another book, which she co-edited, was launched in October 2017 and her next book, 'Officials' is expected in 2018. Nicole has authored a number of articles and chapters in leading publications on the philosophy of law.

Nicole is looking forward to returning with her family to Auckland and to reconnecting with old friends in the Westlake alumni community.

Guest speaker at prize giving

Anna Buchly

Class of '91

Partner at Bell Gully, Guest Speaker prize giving 2017

Anna is a partner at the law firm Bell Gully, a specialist in corporate law, and has advised a number of major NZ and international companies on various transactions.

Anna was Head Girl at Westlake in 1991 and we were delighted to welcome her back to Westlake to share her experiences and pass on advice to our students. Anna clearly valued the start that Westlake gave her and has long-standing friendships with friends from Westlake and maintains an interest in the school through the Alumni Association.



At the prize giving Anna was able to enjoy performances by the talented Westlake Symphony Orchestra, which reminded her of her double bass playing days at Westlake, and the Cantare choir, which is conducted by her former Westlake classmate, Fiona Wilson.

At the end of her final year at school Anna presented the Anna Buchly Cup for Outstanding Performance in Year 11. The cup is presented at the beginning of each school year to the highest achiever in NCEA Level 1.

After leaving Westlake Anna completed her LLB and BCom at Canterbury University, and after initially planning to be an accountant, decided to pursue a career in corporate law. Her legal career has seen her work internationally in Dubai and in Sydney. While at Bell Gully she has overseen the firm's university recruitment programme, been a member of the firm's international strategy committee, and since 2015 has been a member of the firm's Board.

Anna was named on the 2016 NZ Lawyer Hot List which recognizes outstanding lawyers.

Anna is also a trustee of the Breast Cancer Foundation NZ, a role she greatly values for being able to use her skills to give something back to the community.

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Guest speaker at Year 13 Leavers' Function

We welcomed **Dr Karyn Anderson** back to Westlake as the guest speaker at the 2017 Leavers' function, 10 years after she

attended her own in 2007.



She shared some inspiring experiences, particularly during her time as a medical volunteer in Kenya. We wish her well as she leaves her post as Registrar at Waikato Hospital and starts her 6 year specialist training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at 3 smaller regional hospitals.

Read more about Karyn in a previous feature [Alumni Newsletter May 2017](#)

Jessica Pawley, Class of 2006

Author

Congratulations to Jessica Pawley on the publication of her book, *Air Born*. The book launch was held at Takapuna library in October 2017. There are already 1 million fans online for her work which will be translated into Russian and Chinese. International film rights have also been negotiated. Jessica specialises in Young Adult fantasy and romance books. She has spent the last two years growing her online fanbase and her four-book *Generation Icarus* series has earned over one million reads on Wattpad.

Jessica began a Diploma in Creative Writing while in Year 13 and subsequently completed a BA in English and Media Studies at Massey University.

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"My five years at Westlake Girls were highly formative, largely thanks to those staff members who went above and beyond the call of duty to provide us with the best opportunities they could. Because of their hard work, I was able to travel, compete and win both nationally and internationally as a member of Key Cygnetures choir; perform in multiple theatre shows and drama competitions; complete my Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award; and stretch my intellectual abilities to test their limits. I still continue to use knowledge, writing and analysis skills that I learned at high school in my work today, as well as in my tertiary studies and my fiction writing. There were several teachers at Westlake Girls to whom I will forever be grateful."

An early self-published version of *Air Born* was chosen as a Featured Book on Wattpad in 2014, and won a Bronze award for Readers Favourite in 2015. In early 2016, another manuscript, *The Knowledge Keeper* was shortlisted for the national Tessa Duder Award.

When she's not writing or interacting with fans online, Jessica works as a Teaching Assistant at AUT University and has also recently completed her MA (1st Class Hons) with research focusing on online interactive eBook platforms; how these digital communities have evolved their own reading and writing processes and how these might be adapted for educational and commercial purposes. [Read more](#)

Looking Back

1983 - Was this our earliest Westlake Girls Peace Group?

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Amanda Sorrenson ('AS') in the 1983 Peace Group, penned the poem along with Michelle Williams. The group at that time was active in the anti-Springbok tour movement, anti-nuclear ship visits to NZ from the US, and protested about using animals for testing.



And in 2017.....?

Amanda now works for SAFE in a PR Communications role working against cruelty to animals. She is also on the Board for the Vegan Society of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Westlake News

Westlake News - farewell to a long-serving teacher

Michele Larnder - Long-serving staff member
1978-2017

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retiring after 40 years' service at the end of the year.

Michele's various roles at Westlake, since she started in 1978, have included being HOD Social Science, Dean, PPTA Chairperson, Assistant Principal and her current role, Deputy Principal.

Her role as an advisor in Geography led her to work on National curriculum panels and be part of a myriad of assessment changes that have occurred since she started teaching in the mid 1970's.

I have seen the demise of examinations such as School Certificate, 6th form Certificate and Bursary and the move to standards based assessment using both internal and external methods under NCEA.



Michele has always been very involved with co-curricular activities which have created many career highlights and memories. She has produced and managed school shows such as her personal favourite *Fiddler on the Roof* with staff and students performing together in the cast.

Her sporting interests led her to manage and coach netball, and co-ordinate tennis teams over several seasons. Her role managing the Premier Tennis team has seen Westlake rise to be a major force at national level with several top Westlake tennis players subsequently going on to scholarships in the US.

Working with the tennis girls has always been a pleasure – I will miss the players and wish them all the best for the future.

I was also privileged to accompany our Premier Choir on a trip through Europe in 2008. Listening to them perform in notable locations such as the Vienna Musikverein was an emotional experience –but I was not the only one often moved to tears.

I love teaching the students at Westlake – on the whole they want to learn, they take an interest in the wider world and are willing to question and challenge. They show an empathy for their peers and concern for people in society with economic, social and psychological challenges. Teaching in the classroom will be the main aspect I will miss in retirement.

We will miss her in her many roles at Westlake and wish her well in her retirement.

Other staff leaving

Other long-serving staff leaving Westlake this year are Lynley Heron (13 years), Malar Pathmanathan (12), Yee Teck Rau (18), Robyn Fairley (18), Wendy Pettersen (19), and Liz Cable (18). It's been great having them at school and we wish them all well.

Young Westlake student - top golf award

Westlake has a young champion golfer in Year 9 student Silvia Brunotti who won the 2017 NZ Women's Amateur Golf Championship in November 2017.



2017 Drama Awards

The combined Westlake production, Sweeney Todd continued the strong Westlake tradition of high quality combined drama, winning 4 of the top awards at the Showdown Award Ceremony.



The ceremony was held at Sky City with 19 musicals and over 20 plays competing. The ensemble of 90 performers was recognised as Best Chorus, the production was named both People's Choice show of the year, and Best Musical (making this the third year in a row for Westlake productions). Connor Charlesworth from Westlake Boys was awarded Best Male Lead in a Musical.

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[Westlake Girls Class of 1990](#)

[The Westlake Class of 1991](#)

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- Choralation Alumni
- Westlake Symphony Orchestra Alumni
- Westlake Girls Alumni Australia
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- Westlake Boys Alumni Page (Westlakers)



Westlake Girls High School

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