

50 years of the Stuart Laidlaw Memorial Pool

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On the grounds of Middle School, there is a pool with a very special story - The Stuart Laidlaw Memorial Pool, generously donated by the Laidlaw family following the tragic death of their son.

In 1969, Stuart Laidlaw, a young boy from Lismore, started as a boarder at The Geelong College in Form 1.

According to the 1977 edition of Pegasus, he was 'an active and thoughtful boy, he made friends amongst both the staff and boys, establishing himself as a capable student within the classroom as well as actively enjoying outdoor activities.'

Swimming, it seemed, was something of particular interest to Stuart. Pegasus notes that he had begun to show talent in the sport.

But during Stuart's second year of College, tragedy struck.

Following a road accident at Easter in 1970, Stuart Laidlaw passed away at just 12 years of age.

The College community grieved his loss, and spoke fondly of the popular student.

'We at the Prep. School are better for having known him: we remember him with affection and with pride.'

In a generous tribute to their son Stuart's parents, Charles and Patricia Laidlaw, donated a 25m pool to The College.

It was opened a few months later on 30 October 1970, allowing swimming activities to become 'a regular part of the daily life of the school.'

The pool quickly became the most popular place at the Preparatory School, as well as being the envy of the Senior School boys.

In his annual report of 1972, Preparatory School Headmaster, Mr Watson said: "The Stuart Laidlaw Memorial Pool in its first year has proven to be a wonderful addition to the School. The physical education classes used it 'non-stop' throughout February and March with the largest number ever of Swimming Certificates gained."

"It has been a great inspiration to all who are associated with the Preparatory School to see how an event of great sadness has been used to bring benefit to future generations of boys.

— Pegasus of December 1970

One such boy was Stuart's brother, Andrew Laidlaw, who attended the school from 1974-1979.

Now in its 50th year, the Stuart Laidlaw Memorial Pool, as predicted in 1970, has indeed been enjoyed by generations of students at the Preparatory School and Middle School. A fitting memorial to Stuart Laidlaw and his family's legacy at the school.



Stuart Laidlaw

