

"My name is Robert Jorgensen. I am currently the President of the Past Students' Association. As President I am proud to say a few words about the founding decade of the school.

It is hard to believe that free academic high school education, as we now know it, is only 80 years old in this State.

While it is not the oldest high school in Queensland, it is the first to have a solely academic base. There were earlier technical high schools established in areas like Mount Morgan, which at the turn-of-the-20th century were major sources of the state's wealth. The central technical college also provided some secondary education.

In Brisbane, where there were a number of independent grammar schools, there were no free state high schools. In the 1800s, grammar schools provided secondary schooling leading to University Matriculation standard. This was the reason that, at the end of primary school, one sat for a state government scholarship examination which assisted in paying for a secondary education.

When the school was set up in 1921, it made a momentous change in Queensland education. As it was the only State High School, that is one reason why our school plays sport in the GPS competition.

The first principal of the school, Mr Isaac Waddle, guided the school for over 25 years and laid the foundation for the proud school tradition that exists within our school community.



Original site of BSHS
(Sketch by David Philips)

The school was initially situated in the old Normal School on the corner of Adelaide and Edward Street in the city. The school, as we know it, was opened in 1925, when what is now called the 'Red Brick Building', was completed.

There is something special about being one of the foundation students of a school. I saw that when my own son was a foundation student from Years 1 through 7 at a primary school more than 20 years ago.

We are fortunate to have some past students from those foundation years. Please welcome especially:

- Edward Albert Perkins a founding student in 1921 at the Normal School;
- Sadie Brown who was a transition student and attended State High from 1923 at the Normal School to 1926 at the Musgrave Park site which was opened in 1925 and at the end of the decade;
- Cec Smith 1929-33;
- Wallace McAlpine 1921-1924 sends his sincere apologies for not attending the Assembly due to ill health. Wallace unveiled the 75th anniversary plaque in 1996 on

- the site of the Normal School in Edward Street and was not very happy about having to miss this Assembly.



Red Brick Building
(Sketch by David Philips)

At that time, it was possible to start at the school every January or July. A family friend, Jim Gordon, started at the school in July 1925, when the Red Brick Building was opened. It is a pity that the advancing years prevents him from attending a momentous occasion such as this. There is so much that someone who attended the school at that time and matriculated in 1929 (the equivalent of finishing Grade 12) could tell us. There were only nine students in that graduating class.

What a far cry from the education system that we now know today.

The tradition of striving for, and achieving excellence, in academic and other pursuits, that our founding students started lives on as we enter a new century.

Even though the study of Latin is no longer fashionable, the old school motto of 'Scientia est Potestas' is so relevant in this modern world. As our young people prepare themselves to live an ever changing world, the translation of our motto is so apt for these times, for truly 'Knowledge is Power'.

I would like to invite all past students to join the Past Students' Association and stay part of our school tradition."

Author: Mr Robert Jorgensen