

OGANEWS



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PRETORIA HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS' OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION



Starting, shaping, sharing connections

Clockwise from left: Nicky Creux, Collette Wright (Grover), Lee Austinqui, Bronwyn Bantich (Grover)

Welcome to our 2018 newsletter.

ed's column

Friendships formed at Pretoria High School for Girls often last a lifetime. Whether your special friendship started at the entrance of a hostel door or on the tarmac outside the grand main door, it was almost certainly solidified in the corridors, classrooms and on the sports fields.

I have five such cherished friends who are part of my everyday life and I wanted to share my story of connections with you.

First of the five friends is my older sister Gayle Collette Wright (Grover) who attended Girls High five years before me.

Together with Arcadia Primary friends, Nicky Creux and Jana Kruyshaar, we began high school, and in my Standard 7 year Kim Doyle (Dowdeswell) and I firmly forged a friendship on the school squash courts.

Thirteen years after I matriculated, I started teaching English at my *alma mater*, where I struck up a friendship with Lee Austin, a teacher and an Old Girl.

My connections don't stop there! Penny McNair convinced me to join the Old Girls Committee while I was teaching at the school. It was here that I met a team of dynamic ladies with whom I share the same foundation. This team, who truly loves the school, dedicates hours planning, preparing and hosting the various Old Girls functions, including the annual Reunion weekend.

This year the Reunion weekend will take place on 12–14 October. On Friday, 12 October, ALL Old Girls from ANY year, including 2017, are welcome to join us in the pavilion for snacks and beverages. How's that for a good reason to have a Savannah, GnT or glass of vino with friends!

If you are celebrating your 10, 20, 30, 40, or even 50-year reunion, the Saturday Reunion Luncheon has been especially created for you. Your co-ordinator will have been in touch with you. If not, please see the next page for more information. We would love to have as

connections

What strikes me about these ladies (and me) is that while we are all individually independent, we depend on our friendships and connections made during our time at 'The Grand Old Lady'.

I was privileged to have Gayle, Nicky, Kim and Lee at my wedding in December 2017. Unfortunately Jana, who lives in New Zealand, couldn't make the actual wedding day. Fortunately we were able to spend quality time together earlier in June.

many of you join us for this special occasion.

Please like our Facebook page! It is regularly updated with Old Girls news, dates and events. www.facebook.com/PHSGOGA

We have a hashtag too! Post a pic of yourself and an Old Girl – friend, sister, mother, aunt, niece, grandmother. **#PHSGconnect**

All the best,
Bronwyn Bantich (Grover)
Editor



2018 Reunion Weekend Programme of events

reunion weekend summary 2018

- **Friday 12 October**
Cocktail Evening
- **Saturday 13 October**
PHSGOGA AGM
- **Saturday 13 October**
Walkabout with the Principal
- **Saturday 13 October**
Sports Day and Debate Day
- **Saturday 13 October**
Reunion Luncheon

12 October Friday

Cocktail Evening in the Margaret Roberts Quad

6 pm – 10 pm

R150 per person

R100 over 60s

Smart casual

Cash bar

All Old Girls welcome

Join us for an evening of catch-up over a glass of wine or a G&T and enjoy a harvest table of savoury and sweet eats. For ladies who matriculated in 2008, 1998, 1988, 1978 or 1968, kick off the reunion weekend by spending quality time with ladies from your

year in a casual and relaxed environment. Please note that OLD GIRLS from ANY YEAR are welcome to join this event to catch up on news of the school or network with alumni from all years.

13 October Saturday

PHSGOGA AGM South Quad

8 am: tea and scones

9 am: meeting

All Old Girls welcome

Please join us in South Quad for tea and scones, after which we will move into a nearby classroom and commence with our Annual General Meeting. OLD GIRLS from ANY YEAR are welcome to join this event.

reunion convenors 2018

For convenor contact details or further information regarding the reunion, please contact Old Girls' Secretary Alison Cowan: oldgirls@phsg.org.za or 012 430 7341.

10-year (2008)

Tammy-Lynne Bekker
Dominique Sfredo
Bea Hubbard

20-year (1998)

Tammy Joubert

30-year (1988)

Alexandra Janisch

40-year (1978)

Jacqui Burn

50-year (1968)

Laurel Becker

13 October Saturday

School walkabout with the Principal

10 am

All Old Girls welcome

All Old Girls are invited to attend a guided tour of the school which will be led by the Principal, Mrs Phillipa Erasmus and the OGA Chairperson Mrs Rose Spruyt. The tour will commence from the foyer at 10 am after the AGM.

13 October Saturday

Sports Day and Debate Day

From 8 am: sports

From 9 am: debating

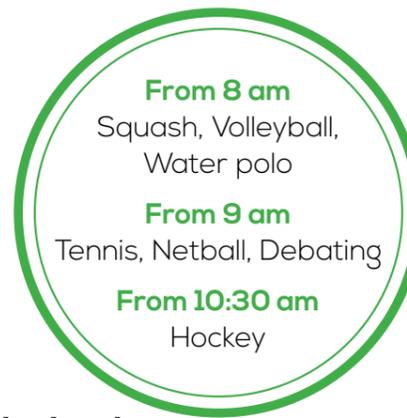
All Old Girls welcome

Every year the Old Girls of the school pool their talent, warm up their (aching and aging) muscles and bring their passion to the school sports fields to tackle their opponents: The PHSG first teams!

There is also a debating competition that takes place between our experienced Old Girls and the young talent of the school's debating team.

OLD GIRLS from ANY YEAR are welcome to participate or spectate. Your support for our older and wiser ladies will be much appreciated!

To participate, please email phsgogasport@gmail.com



13 October Saturday

Reunion Luncheon in the school hall

12 pm for 1 pm

R290 per person

R250 over 60s

Smart casual

Cash bar

PHSG memorabilia on sale – cash only

Attendance in restricted to Old Girls celebrating their 10th, 20th, 30th, 40th and 50th+ reunions

The reunion luncheon is strictly for Old Girls celebrating their 10th, 20th, 30th, 40th and 50th+-year reunions. It will take place in the school hall at PHSG from 12.30 pm after the school walkabout, AGM and sporting events.

Our reunion occasions are always fabulous and loaded with nostalgia. Old Girls who attend, enjoy meeting up with long-lost friends and reliving their PHSG memories. Many ladies go to great lengths to attend this special day and we usually (almost always!) have Old Girls who have made a special effort to reach us from abroad or countrywide.

As the OGA Committee, it gives us immense pleasure to plan and execute the reunion gathering every year, and this year will be no different! We invite you to join us for a luncheon that includes a 3-course meal, drinks and **lots** of chatting. Please come!



Cocktail Evening 2017



Sports Day 2017



Debate Day 2017



Reunion Luncheon 2017

update

Acting Principal's Report 2017

Dear Old Girls

Our former principal, Karen du Toit, made the decision to leave the school on early retirement at the end of 2017. The school was saddened to say farewell and we wish her all the best with her new endeavours. We also know that she will take this opportunity to spend quality time with her family.

I was appointed as Acting Principal and fulfilled this role until the end of July 2018. The newly appointed Principal took up her role at the beginning of August 2018. The school and staff are very excited to have her join us and lead the school into the future.

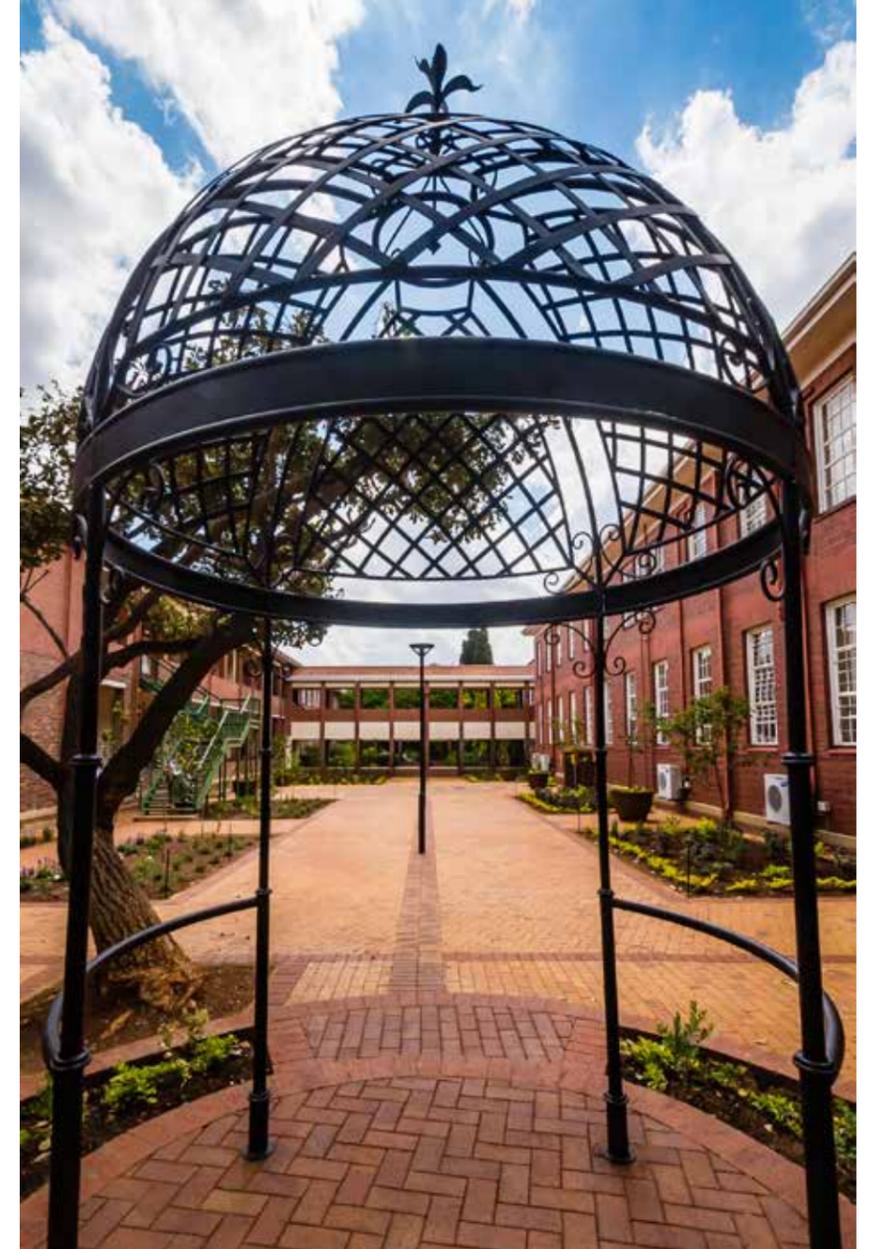
As usual, the school calendar was filled with many events and occasions. I have included a few of these, in my letter, that stood out for me.

It was with great sadness that the school received the news that Frau Birgit du Toit

had passed away, on 22 December 2017, after a year of fighting cancer. She had been an integral part of PHSG for many years, in all spheres of school life. She was also an Old Girl of the school. The school held a Memorial Service, on 22 January in the school hall. The memorial service was attended by current pupils, Old Girls, PHSG staff and staff from our neighbouring schools. Birgit played an instrumental role in the Four Schools Concert and Art Exhibition and she was widely recognised in the greater school environment. We wish to express our condolences to her husband Kobus and her children, Elke and Jaco as well as the rest of the family.

Lethabo Motsoaledi, who matriculated in 2011, was the guest speaker at the Grade 8 Commencement Ceremony. While at PHSG, she was a member of the RCL Executive,

Head of Hockey as well as Head of House. Lethabo is the Co-Founder and Co-CEO of Motsoaledi & West, an innovation studio which helps companies improve their customer needs, test new ideas and explore new markets. She has been celebrated among South Africa's most powerful and successful young achievers. Lethabo, a Geomatics Engineering graduate from the University of Cape Town, is also an academic who has been awarded various fellowships. Keep watching this space for news of this dynamic Old Girl.



The Margaret Roberts Garden: keeper of hopes and dreams.



Guest speaker and Old Girl, Refiloe Ntsekhe presents the Old Girls Award to Lexi Reeler at the 2017 Valediction. Representing the OGA is outgoing Chairperson Kim Lovegrove.



PHSG Staff and Old Girls Association at the Reunion Cocktail Evening 2017
From left: Allison Lamb, Doret Schoombie, Irene Turpin, Rose Spruyt, Joan Viljoen, Penny McNair, Karen du Toit, Lynelle Van Heerden.

The school embarked on a major building project in March 2017. The asbestos classrooms (known to most girls as the ‘prefabs’) needed to be replaced. Because of their age, they had started to become a health risk. The Geography block was extended up to the gymnasium and six new classrooms replaced the asbestos classrooms. A central book room is also part of the new building and all textbooks will be issued and collected from here. The main building and the new building are now linked by a bridge. This connects all the second floor classrooms in the whole building.

The quad between the original building and the Geography classrooms was changed during this project. The tarmac was replaced with a brick surface and the giant pine tree was removed. Several new trees and a garden were planted in its place. The new garden is aptly named the Margaret Roberts Garden and contains Margret Roberts Lavender.

The South African doyenne of herbs, was an Old Girl of the school and both her daughters Gail and Sandy attended PHSG.

There are five benches set up in this garden and the legs of the benches contain seed banks. The Margaret Roberts Heritage Seed Bank Program was officially started on 17 April. Sandy Roberts, a proud Old Girl, spoke about the importance of growing and sustaining our natural seeds.

The 2018 Grade 8 learners were the first generation to start the program. Each girl wrote a letter, addressed to herself, containing her hopes and dreams. They placed their letters with their seeds, in the seed banks, symbolising the growth of their dreams. We look forward to 2022 when the seed bank will be opened and they will receive their seeds and letters. We would like to thank the Margaret Roberts Herbal Centre for their effort and assistance in what we hope will be a lasting tradition.

The guest speaker at the Valediction was an Old Girl,

Refiloe Ntsekhe, who gave the girls an inspiring message. She is currently a leading South African politician and she also serves as the Gauteng Social Development Shadow MEC. On this occasion Lexi Reeler received the Old Girls Award and was presented with a framed artwork of the school building.

To end on a positive note: Excellent results were achieved by the Grade 12s of 2017. Our 270 Matric Students accumulated 410 Distinctions amongst them and 92.9% of the learners achieved an access to a Bachelor’s Degree (University Entrance). Each of the top 38 students had an overall average above 80%. Simona Coetzee, PHSG’s top student was amongst the 30 top achievers of 2017 in Tshwane. Further information shows that since 2003, 4030 girls have matriculated from this school with only two being unsuccessful. Over the years, on average 93.1 % received access to a Bachelor’s Degree.

Thank you to all of the Old Girls who support and encourage the staff of our school. We enjoy being able to welcome you to various events, or just a stroll down memory lane at the school with you. I look forward to seeing and meeting you at the various branch meetings and also at the Reunion Weekend in October.

Mrs Doret Schoombie



Mrs Phillipa J. Erasmus started at the school on 1 August 2017 and the school believes she is the best qualified and most appropriate candidate to guide our students to be the leaders of tomorrow. She has come to us from Cornwall Hill College, where she was the Deputy Principal for the High School and the Head of Boarding.

With 33 years of educational experience in both the classroom and administration, she believes the highlight of her career thus far is the transformation of Carleton Jones High School from an average community school, in an extremely conservative community, to the top ranked school in the District. It was here that she created and ran the Carleton Jones Centre of Excellence in Maths, Science and English.

Having spent many years in deputy positions learning what makes a good school into an even

better school, Mrs Erasmus believes there is no better place to realise her ambition of being a Principal than at PHSG, her Alma Mater. As an Old Girl (PHSG alumna), she believes that despite the evolving world there remains a sense of tradition in being a Girls High girl.

Her vision for the school is twofold. The first being that each learner and staff member at PHSG feels valued for who they are and for their contribution to the greater of the whole school. The second is to achieve unity and pride while taking the school to greater heights in all spheres. PHSG is confident she will build on the strengths of this renowned school as we, in unity, evolve into this new phase of leadership.

Ed’s note: The Department of Education mandated the use of Principal and the role has been named thus since the beginning of the 2018 school year.



Adapted from the statement that was released on the PHSGOGA Facebook page. www.facebook.com/PHSGOGA

Gen (right) enjoying down time with her sister Karen van Zyl

Gen Cator

Every Old Girl can remember at least one teacher who made a difference in her life. Gen Cator is one such teacher. An Old Girl and beloved teacher of 19 years at PHSG, Gen shares a few of her memories with us. Some of you may have had the pleasure of attending her delightful English and Guidance lessons and others may even have been fellow pupils.

Matriculated	1984
Years teaching at PHSG	1992 – 2011
Married name	Cilliers
Current home	Cape Town
Current job	Part-time English teacher at Rondebosch Boys' High and freelance writer.

Describe two of your fondest memories of your school days at PHSG.

Running to Carol Verwayen's English class on a Friday to read Gerald Durrell's *My Family and Other Animals*. We loved her so much.

Being so grateful to Gail Roberts at hostel one morning when she ate about five oily, cold fried eggs so that a number of us didn't have to. Her only condition was that we had to give her our pudding at lunch time!

And your fondest memories of your teaching days at PHSG?

Learning from an awesome English Department head, Jenny Janisch, my incredible mentor. I was also privileged to teach with Moira Arni (who taught me in Standards 9 & 10). I remember special friendships and much laughter with Michelle Kaufmann, Dee McCusker, Lalage Jackson and Robin Jelley – all incredible English teachers from whom I learned so much.

Sneaking off during a free lesson with friends, Gail Lumby and Megan Albertyn, to have my

nose pierced. They got belly piercings. At the tea table the following day Gail cheekily told Alison Kitto (who was Headmistress at that time) that if she wanted to sit at our table she had better get herself a piercing!

It was amazing to teach for so many years with my old school friend, Sandy Dorlas. Taking my niece Ashley to school with me every morning until I left in 2010 was very special.

Name your most valuable life lesson learned at PHSG?

The value and impact of kindness.



Should you wish to nominate a teacher to participate in the Q&A for next year's newsletter, please email Bronwyn.grover@gmail.com with your suggestions.



A chilly affair

Spring Fair 2018

This year's Spring Fair was moved from its traditional Saturday in September to an earlier (and much chillier!) Saturday in August. This was necessary to accommodate Grade 12 Preliminary Examinations scheduled by the Department of Education.

The gymnasium was needed as an examination venue, making it impossible to set up the popular book stall – a big fundraising aspect; and so the Spring Fair was moved forward.

Despite the chill, we had many Old Girls visit our popular stall, selling the ever-popular Girls High and Boys High teddies. PHSG memorabilia and OGA badges were also for sale. Copies of the school magazine from various years were available as well as books documenting the history of the school.

The Spring Fair is a time of reconnection and sheer happiness and we love it! Please visit us next year at the OGA stall. 

in memoriam 2017- 2018

The Old Girls' Association sends condolences to the families who lost loved ones in 2017 and 2018. Every one of these ladies was a special member of our PHSG family.

Charnee Beddy (1997)	Birgit du Toit (KUNN 1983) Old Girl and teacher at PHSG
Katy Edwards (1980)	Tamryn Fortuin (2013)
Tamryn Fortuin (2013)	Pheladi Malaka (1996)
Georgina Mitchell (HARWOOD 1930) Skydiving granny and previously PHSGs' oldest Old Girl	Merle Noonan PHSG – school secretary for 27 years
Margaret Oosthuizen (ROBERTS 1955) South African herbalist and author	Megan van der Zwan (2012)



NEWS

Nicky Creux matriculated from PHSG in 1998 and graduated with a PhD in Genetics from the University of Pretoria in 2014. A postdoctoral fellowship at the University of California, Davis saw her packing up her life in Pretoria and moving across the globe to California where we recently caught up with her.

My day typically begins before dawn in sunflower fields where I spend the morning studying how the sunflower's internal clock and environmental cues, such as light and temperature, regulate flowering and pollinator visits. This study has me systematically photographing sunflowers and counting bee visits under different conditions. The findings from this research are important in light of climate change because drastic changes in temperature could affect the timing of pollen release, pollinator visits and plant reproduction and understanding the underlying genetics could ultimately help plant breeders breed crops that are more tolerant to climate change.

Davis is a small university town, famed for being the bicycle mecca of the United States. With this

active lifestyle, the stereotype about obesity in the USA is not prevalent here and when the weather is good most people are out and about, walking, running or biking. Davis weather is good most days (if you like it hot, that is). There is winter rainfall leading to long, dry, blue-sky, summer days that can easily go over 40°C!

Long, dry summers go hand in hand with ice cold beer and Davis has three local breweries in town, with more popping up each year and a favourite pub called 'University of Beer' with over 60 beers on tap! Davis is the perfect place for top class agricultural research, ice cold beer and long summer days, just what every sunflower researcher needs in her life. 

We love to hear and share your news from all over South Africa and abroad. Please send us your news and photographs via email to oldgirls@phsg.org.za

2017 reunion weekend Gallery









Far left: Alison Cowan (PHSGOGA Secretary), Doret Schoombie (Deputy Principal), Bea Hubbard (PHSGOGA Staff Representative)

Top left: Kim Lovegrove (ex-Chairperson, OGA Committee) and Lindy Loots (ex-member OGA Committee).

Bottom left: Wilma Cloete (ex-Chairperson, OGA Committee) and Ann Barnard (ex-member OGA Committee).

'The only constant in life is change.'

Greek philosopher Heraclitus was on the button with that one! Perhaps most pertinent to us during recent leadership role changes at both the school and the OGA Committee. Our wise leaders created space for a new generation to forge their own paths, and we take this opportunity to thank a number of dynamic ladies for their unflinching service to the school.

Karen Du Toit

Karen began her career at PHSG in 1989 as a Biology teacher and went on to serve 'The Grand Old Lady' for 28 years.

In 1994 she took on the roles of Head of Biology and Head of Culture. She shared her passion for these subjects and took a genuine interest in every girl's progress. Karen's gentle and caring nature was valued and her classroom was always a welcoming and warm environment.

In 2003 she took up the challenge of Deputy Headmistress and swiftly became a steadfast support for many staff members. A sense of relief and hope always followed a difficult conversation with her.

Karen was also responsible for the admissions process – an arduous task. Once the final selection

was made by the Department of Education, she ensured that every Grade 8 learner was made to feel like a special member of the school.

In 2015, Karen took over the leadership of the school as Headmistress. In a time of political strain and tension, her tenure was often beset with challenges. Karen's discretion during these difficult times is to be lauded. While some adverse opinions were held at the time, Karen stood steadfast and continued to lead the school into a new era.

The Old Girls' Association would like to thank Karen for her unwavering dedication to Pretoria High School for Girls. We acknowledge both the personal and career sacrifices made during her tenure. A warm and always welcoming embrace is extended to a very special member of our Girls High family.

Doret Schoombie

Doret Schoombie stepped up to the plate as Acting Principal for the first six months of 2018.

Her willingness to serve the school and maintain its excellent standards are evident. In 2012 she was appointed Deputy Principal and served as a leader and pillar of support to then-Headmistresses Penny McNair and Karen Du Toit.

Doret started her career at PHSG as a teacher in 1997. Roles she has fulfilled include: parent, teacher, Head of Department, Deputy Principal, Acting Principal and everything in-between!

The Old Girls' Association would like to thank Doret for her invaluable contribution to our school. We appreciate her vision and passion for creating a modern

learning environment underpinned with the values that founding Headmistress Edith Aitken outlined in the school's charter in 1902.

Wilma Cloete

Many of you would have seen Wilma Cloete cheerfully selling goodies at the Old Girls' stall at the Spring Fair or working tirelessly during the Old Girls' weekend. Whenever you see her, she always looks elegant and is forever smiling. She is synonymous with the Old Girls' Association having joined the committee in 2002.

Wilma served as the Chairperson from 2007 to 2015, and during those eight years, her generosity towards the school and her passion for connecting Old Girls were evident. She brought

many new faces onto the committee and encouraged the members to implement their new ideas.

In 2016, Wilma decided to step down as the Chairperson and hand over the reins to Kim Lovegrove. Wilma is a very busy and multi-talented woman and, with the arrival of a grandchild, she decided to support the next generation and spend more time with her family and granddaughter. Therefore, in 2017 she made the difficult decision and resigned from the committee. However, Wilma is always just a phone call away and is always willing to help us when necessary.

Thank you Wilma for dedication to the Old Girls' Association. Your kindness and leadership are deeply appreciated.

Kim Lovegrove

Kim Lovegrove was elected Chairperson of the Old Girls' Association in 2016 and her passion for developing the committee and leading it into a fresh, new era quickly became evident.

Kim, with her level-headed approach, was instrumental in guiding the school through difficult times. She spent many hours in meetings representing every Old Girl who understands the importance of tradition, yet also understands the purpose of change.

In 2017, Kim stepped down from the OGA Committee due to work commitments. She was previously an active member of the committee for a number of years while simultaneously growing her career – not a simple task – and we are very proud of her for managing that so gracefully.

The Spring Fair is one of Kim's favourite PHSG traditions and, together with her mother Bronwyn, have spent many hours over the years preparing and running the stall.

We thank Kim for her commitment, vision and dedication to the Old Girls' Association. We look forward to continued association with her at our events and look forward to hearing her future news.

Tina Panayi

It takes a person with deep integrity to manage the finances of a non-profit organisation and Tina has that in bucketloads. Tina served the committee for over 15 years, travelling from Johannesburg to Pretoria for OGA Committee meetings, rarely missing one.

We thank Tina for her professionalism and utmost dedication to the Old Girls' Association and look forward to seeing her at OGA events in the future.

Londiwe Mahlangu

If there is one person who is passionate about SA's capital city, it's Londiwe! She is certainly passionate about her *alma mater* too.

Londiwe served as a committee member and managed the Old Girls' Spring Fair stall. Unfortunately for the OGA, this talented young entrepreneur needed more time to focus on her career and her numerous other projects and she had to step down.

Thank you, Londiwe for bringing your bright smile, warmth and enthusiasm to the committee. We appreciate your service over the years and hope to continue seeing you at our events.



Old Girls' Association Committee 2018

Chairperson	Rose Spruyt
Deputy Chairperson	Bronwyn Bantich
Secretary	Alison Cowan
Treasurer	Rozanne Malala
Spring Fair	Lavonne Wittman
School Representative	Bea Hubbard
School Representative	Allison Lamb
Legal Advisor and Alumni	Tammy-Lynne Bekker
Reunion	Dorothy Milwidsky
Media and Photography	Saskia Schuttenberg
PHSG Marketing	Kerry du Toit (employed by PHSG)
Member	Felicia Ntisi



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