



Thursday 19 October 2023
Valedictory Dinner

Fellow's Address

Jeff Sipek

Fellow of The Women's College
Director of Operations 1989 – 2023

Good evening everyone!

To:

- Chair of Council – Carol Dickenson
- Head of College – Flo Kearney
- Distinguished guests
- Council members
- Staff
- Family and friends here tonight
- And Woozas

Well, where do I start?

Firstly, thank you to the College Council for this honour of being made a Fellow of the Women's College.

Being honoured by my peers with this award for something I've loved doing for nearly 35 years is incredible, and words can't describe my appreciation.

I see this award as a token to everyone that has supported me over all these years.

There have been so many people that have been part of my journey at Women's, and I would be here all night if I tried to acknowledge you all, however I will attempt to thank you all in the time I have.

I would like to acknowledge former Heads of College Helen McBride, Maureen Aitken, Iyla Davies and current Head of College Flo Kearney. Thank you for your unfailing support during your times as Heads of College. Your guidance, trust and friendships developed has provided me with so many wonderful memories and opportunities and this is the reason why I'm still here today.

To all current staff, Women's College is truly "one big family". I would like to thank you all personally, but I know if I start to name people, I will miss someone, so thank you all, from the bottom of my heart, for your friendship and support in making this College the great place it is today. I will miss our daily chats, especially the robust discussions about why and how the Swannies will win the flag this year and every year!

I would like to thank Barbara, our Executive Housekeeper, who is here tonight and will also be retiring this year after 17 years in her position. Your support and commitment to your role and the presentation of this College today is reflective of your hard work over all these years.



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There are a lot of former staff I would like to thank. To Anne, Rhonda, Elsa, John, Russell (Iyla's husband), Chloe, Amy, Bill and everyone else, thank you for the memories and being part of my journey.

Congratulations to Kim Emery tonight on your Fellowship award. Kim and I have been friends for a long time and her passion for all things Women's is infectious!

To this year's Student Leadership Team – Phoebe, Lili, Jemma, Stella, Ellen and your team – thank you all for your friendships and support provided to me throughout your time at College. I too will miss our regular check-ins and catchup chats had throughout the year.

Congratulations to all the Valedicts and Graduands tonight, wishing you all the very best in your futures.

To the returning 2024 Woozas, embrace the opportunity you have to be part of this wonderful community. The friendships you will develop will be life-long. All the very best for your futures.

As I leave this College at the end of the year, I do so with so many fond memories that I'll cherish for the rest of my life. Saying goodbye is never easy and after nearly 35 years it's more difficult than I thought.

To my family – my wife, Maureen, and daughters, Tory and Hayleigh – thank you for your patience over all these years. I know there were many times when I spent more time at work than at home. From next year I'll have no excuses, other than I might say I'm busy tomorrow because I'm playing golf or lawn bowls.

Finally, to The Women's College community, thank you again from the bottom of my heart for this awesome experience that has been bestowed upon me.

I will miss you all! Farewell!