In this exciting and significant year of the 125 year anniversary of Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta, it is with great pleasure that I report on the events and activities of our OLMC Alumnae for the 2013-2014 year.

2014 heralded the changeover in Principalship from Kitty Guerin to Stephen Walsh. We welcomed and congratulated Stephen to the role as College Principal pledging our continual support for OLMC under his leadership. At our first committee meeting, we appreciated Stephen’s “Getting to Know Him” biography. This really “broke the ice” for us and in turn we shared a little brief about ourselves.

October 12, 2013 – we hosted the Boarders reunion where 69 ex-students attended. This was a very successful event, with special thanks to Alumnae Committee members: Deretta Andrews, Jenni Gordon and Kay Tyers for their planning and organisation of the function.

The Farewell Mass and celebration for Kitty Guerin was held on December 7, 2013. In order to thank Kitty for her continued support and direction, the Alumnae presented a special gift of sapphire earrings at last year’s reunion AGM. A letter of thanks was received by the Committee in appreciation of her association with the Alumnae over the ten years of her service as Principal. On the same night, long-standing Executive Secretary to Kitty: Bernadette Jackson, who was our link with OLMC and a great help to us over all the years of Alumnae association (2004-13), was privately given a gift of gratitude. Thank you, Kitty and Bernadette.

The annual presentation of the Catherine McAuley Award was conducted on February 18. Vice-President Christine Robertson made the presentation of the trophy and flowers to the recipient Marie Parmenter at the school hall assembly. Sr Barbara later presented the Alumnae gift- a pendant and matching earrings. Marie thanked the Alumnae in a letter of appreciation for a really special celebration shared with family and friends from school.

On February 25, the 125 Year Mass was celebrated in Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, presided over by Bishop Anthony Fisher. Several Committee members were present as well as many other Alumnae, staff, students and their families. The Alma Mater was sung with everyone in a big circle within the Cathedral quadrangle.

On June 5 and 6, at Parramatta Riverside Theatre, an integrated group of OLMC musicians celebrated 125 years of musical tradition at OLMC. Participants were: students, present and past, and staff. The theme of most pieces performed was MERCY, three of the pieces having been particularly commissioned for the occasion. The finale was a rousing rendition of the Alma Mater- orchestra and all!

More recently, on Friday, August 29, the Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Councillor John Chedid and current Councillors hosted the OLMC 125th year Anniversary Civic reception at the Parramatta Town Hall. In attendance were Sisters of Mercy, Past Principals, Current College Executive, Staff, Board Members, College P&F and Alumnae. It was a memorable evening, where Assistant Principal, Tanya Appleby, as Master of Ceremonies steered the official proceedings, which included a Prayer led by College Director of Mission, Claire Thomas.

Official addresses were given by:
Lord Mayor, John Chedid; College Principal, Stephen Walsh,
Worth noting was the wonderful music played by the College Chamber ensemble. I felt such deep pride in my Alma Mater and our Country as we sang in unison The Australian National Anthem.

This past Monday, September 8 was the Mercy Day Mass 2014 at Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, where once again the Alumnae Committee were invited to join OLMC Parramatta Community in this special 125th Anniversary Year of celebration.

Today Sunday, September 14 is our very special day hosted by the Alumnae. We feel honoured that you are here from near and far at our Alma Mater celebrating the Holy Eucharist with College Chaplain, Father Walter Fogarty, in the Mother Clare Dunphy Chapel and later the AGM and luncheon in the Edith Angel Hall.

And let us not forget the Mercy Tree Foundation- an opportunity for all of us to become custodians of the Mercy Tree and “dig deep” in generosity to support this central symbol for Mercy initiatives.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated Alumnae team for their service in ensuring that our Alumnae represent “the college of our hearts always”. Their generosity of time, talent and enthusiasm is a joy to behold.

I ask Venerable Catherine McAuley for her blessings upon us today and thank the Sisters of Mercy for saying Yes to God’s Will in answering the call to educate the young women of western Sydney in so many treasured ways for 125 years.

Finally, in the words which are so much a part of our Mercy heritage- Sub Tuum Praesidium, - may we always take refuge under the gentle protection of Mary, our universal mother, who models for us the love of our merciful God.

May you all have a wonderful Mercy Day on September 24.

Grace Thomson
(President)