

**FAREWELL TO SR PHILLIPA MURPHY**

**19 November 2008**

**St Johns College, Darwin**

**MARY O'REERI's SPEECH**

**Good evening everyone**

**On behalf of the Indigenous Parents of St Johns College, I am pleased to say a few words on this important occasion.**

**Today is a sad moment in one way because it marks our Farewell to Sr Phillipa.**

**It is also a happy time because we know that Sr Phillipa has made a decision within the sanctity of faith and everything is perfect in that way.**

**This evening I would like to focus on Sr Phillipa's contribution in a few modest words.**

**Education is one of those topics that will always generate debate by governments and other policy makers, administrators and teachers, parents and students.**

**We hear so much talk about literacy and numeracy, syllabus content, the knowledge economy and the information age.**

**But what is less often explored is just what it is when it all comes down to it that makes a 'good school'?**

**To me, the answer is simple.**

**A good school is a school that respects the total human being and nurtures behaviours and values within them that will protect and guide that human being for the course of their lives.**

**The values of truth and faith are second to none.**

**The behaviours of a love of learning and a willingness to share are also second to none.**

**I believe that Sr Phillipa embodies these behaviours and values and has stood firm at every turn in making them the foundation of St John's College and the centerpiece of every student's opportunity whilst schooling here.**

**In so doing, Sr Phillipa has pursued a level of excellence in achievement that has placed St Johns College at the forefront of many important measures of success in the Northern Territory.**

**For example:**

- **100% of students reaching national Literacy and Numeracy benchmarks in the Year 7 MAP Test**
- **97% of Year 12's receiving their NTCE**
- **Year 12 students receiving an above state average of A Grades in the NTCE**

**and**

- **100% of eligible Indigenous students receiving NTCE**

**These outcomes are truly outstanding.**

**Sr Phillipa is always the first to acknowledge the contribution of others in achieving these outcomes.**

**But tonight I want to say on behalf of the Indigenous parents, that with you as the Captain of the ship, Sr Phillipa St Johns College has flourished and you have shown by your conviction, grace and intellect that you can bring the best out of those people who work so hard and tirelessly on the details every hour. In thanking you, Sr Phillipa we also thank John and Ora and Cathy and their colleagues.**

**As parents we are so very grateful to you, Sr Phillipa.**

**We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your love and kindness.**

**We honour you for your humanity and your truth.**

**We give you every blessing in your life ahead.**