

# KATRINA DAWSON MEMORIAL SERVICE

THE GREAT HALL,  
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

TUESDAY 23 DECEMBER, 2014

*Loved and loving family, dear friends:*

*It is an honour for me to share remembrances of Katrina Dawson with you.*

*In the last week, through tears of anguish and deep sadness, people across our country have come to know Katrina with love, respect, admiration; belonging to us all—her achievements, her contributions:*

*The barrister, the fierce intellect.*

*The things that stand like stone.*

*Kindness, courage, selflessness.*

*A woman of her time.*

*Family, marriage, work, community, giving, sharing, responsibility, accomplishment.*

*We have looked into the images of a lovely young couple—sparkle, energy, vivacity—Katrina keeping a little to herself, that gentle modesty of hers.*

*At the heart of it all, a wonderful young Australian woman of immense capacity, strength of character and purpose.*

*Coming into her own, into the fullness of her life, into the fulfilment of sure foundations, of reaching her extraordinary potential. So much more, for her to do.*

*Today we celebrate Katrina's glittering prizes, her fine personal qualities, and the joie de vivre she carried.*

*She was not too good to be true, but very nearly so. I remember the first time we met on the steps of Women's College in 1997. It was in O Week. Katrina and her pals on the House Committee had the job of settling the Freshers in and ensuring that they survived the extreme nonsense planned for them.*

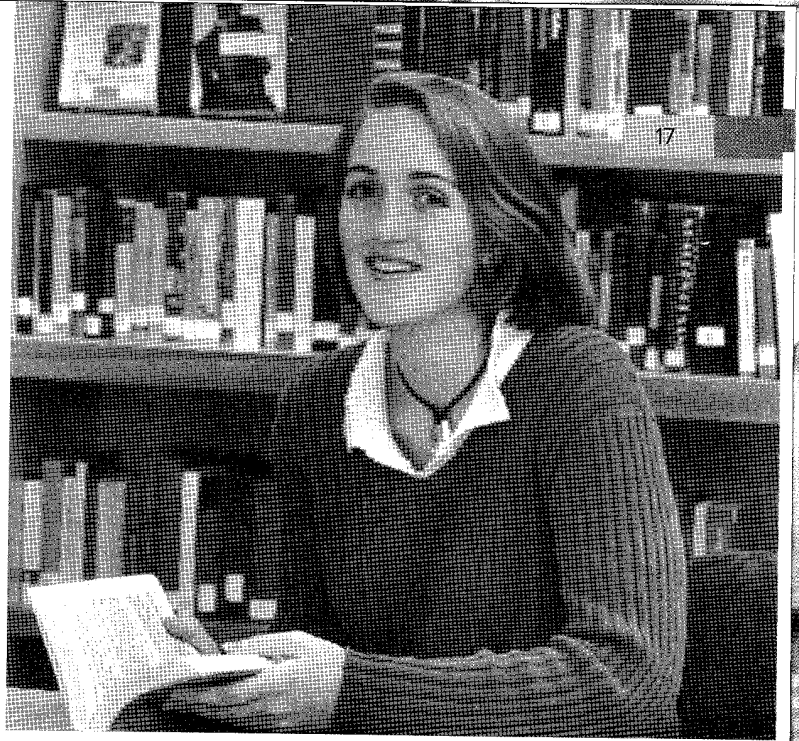
*Exhilarating and exhausting.*

*I saw straight away the energy, the organiser, the girl you could count on.*

*I knew about her, the perfect score in the HSC, the Grace Frazer scholarship (indeed the 3rd in her family), but what I did not know was how much I would value and enjoy the enduring friendship, established in those early days of my years as Principal—the privilege of living in a community of scholars, in their important and influential years of transition from girlhood to womanhood.*

*Katrina threw herself into College life—that full engagement, that total commitment she gave to everything she took on. Enthusiasm in spades—rowing, basketball, skiing, tennis, swimming, hockey, debating. In 1998 she was elected Senior Student—a demanding position that is about trust, leadership, integrity, good humour, some difficult decisions. At 20, an assured and thoughtful public speaker, incisive and persuasive in argument.*

*My notes of our conversations of the time remind me that we often spoke of human rights issues at international and local levels, and ways in which ideals and ideas can be translated into practice. Katrina quietly and consistently was working as a volunteer in Médecins Sans Frontières, the Redfern Legal Centre*



*and the Tenants Union. I observed her sensitivity to those affected by disadvantage and her belief in the dignity and worth of every human being.*

*Oh yes, we spoke of many things. Her hopes, her aspirations, her future.*

*In a conference paper in 1998, A College of One's Own, Katrina quoted Jill Kerr Conway:*

*"An essential part of women's education comes from living and working in close association with women peers. Through the mirror of women colleagues who are leaders, scholars, path breakers, skilled professionals, young women learn to know and value themselves."*

*I am confident in saying that Katrina loved her college years.*

*We "Women's girls" keep in touch.*

*I followed Katrina's milestones with absolute delight—meeting now and then—treasured family connections keeping me up to date. I was thrilled when she went to the Bar and into practice. She loved it immediately and she fell in love.*

*We watched in wonder as she and Paul pursued demanding careers with the bliss of having three dear little children,*

*Chloe, Oliver and Sascha.*

*Ladies and Gentlemen, Katrina's life stands as a source of courage, support and inspiration to friends and colleagues and to all who loved her.*

*Our country has lost a shining star.*

*A golden life that will always be remembered in a way that gives us hope and reassurance.*

*The Katrina Dawson Foundation will focus on the education of women, giving opportunities for reaching potential, for contributing and achieving—to live the life imagined. A promise for the future of our nation and I am honoured to be its founding member.*

*Katrina knew and understood the power of education—the transformation it brings, the meaning it gives to equality of opportunity, to empowerment of women. Her Foundation will carry on her efforts to enrich and enhance our community; generous spirit, taking action, authentic, practical. It will enable amazing young women like her to follow her example—to follow their dreams.*

**The Hon. Quentin Bryce AD CVO**