



# LORETO Mandeville Hall Toorak

## Where Are They Now?



### Virginia Farley – Class of 1973

Virginia looks back on Mandeville with fond memories and is honoured to be part of the lineage of the Farley Family and Loreto history, dating back to the 1920s with two of her aunties joining the Loreto Order. She was born and raised on a sheep and cattle property near Heathcote in Central Victoria. Ever since she could hold a pencil Virginia has been madly sketching, especially horses as her father was a keen horseman who also owned several racehorses. The youngest of six children, Virginia started boarding at the age of 12 so her older sister Angela (who was in her last year of school) could keep a watchful eye on her. She remembers her boarding group and wonderful friendships and memories. She especially remembers Sister Jennifer Collins with her delightful sense of humour and the other nuns as being fantastic mentors.

After school, as with many budding artists, Virginia's enthusiasm to train at tertiary level was tempered by parental advice: "have something to fall back on". Good sound advice, which resulted in a nursing career at St Vincent's Hospital, following in the footsteps of her mother and two elder sisters Gabrielle and Rosemarie. Whilst nursing she was encouraged by her sister Genevieve (who bought Virginia her first easel). She then enrolled in art class with Carol Boothman and has not looked back! Virginia retired from nursing after 30 years, building up her experience and love for painting, winning several art awards and having several exhibitions.



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During these years Virginia, an avid tennis player, noticed there was a void in the market for lovely tennis clothes, so with a friend she embarked on designing a tennis clothing label. "Racket Club" was very successful but with both girls working full time there was too much pressure. After several years they decided to pull the pin on the venture.

Meanwhile Virginia continued to make art and one of her career highlights was being selected as a finalist in the 2011 Inglis Equine Art Competition. She and her husband David flew to Sydney to meet Gai Waterhouse at Randwick Racecourse. Her current exhibition is at The Hive Gallery, Ocean Grove (online due to current circumstances) until 15 June 2020.

Virginia now lives on a sheep and cropping property in Western Victoria with her husband David Mercer. It has been fantastic returning to the land and being surrounded and inspired by the animals as she goes on her daily walks with the dogs. Sheep like people, have personalities, which she loves to capture on canvas with explosive colour. Last year Virginia and David visited South Africa which had a huge effect on her, as she fell in love with the animals which has taken her art in a new direction.

In her spare time Virginia enjoys tennis, rowing, music, yoga, gardening, farming and family and the occasional live show in Melbourne.

Virginia believes her Loreto education is one of the most valuable experiences of her life, with high standard education, values and wonderful friendships. She realises how fortunate and privileged she is for the wonderful opportunity which has brought such fantastic memories.