

Sydney Adventist College, Australia

MILTON HOOK

Milton Hook, Ed.D. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States). Hook retired in 1997 as a minister in the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia. An Australian by birth Hook has served the Church as a teacher at the elementary, academy and college levels, a missionary in Papua New Guinea, and as a local church pastor. In retirement he is a conjoint senior lecturer at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored *Flames Over Battle Creek*, *Avondale: Experiment on the Dora*, *Desmond Ford: Reformist Theologian, Gospel Revivalist* the *Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series*, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.

Sydney Adventist College commenced operation at Burwood, Sydney, in 1937. In 1948 the school transferred to Albert Road, Strathfield, where it operated until closed at the end of 2012.

Concord School

The first attempt to establish a secondary school in Sydney, New South Wales, came about because of an ideological tussle at the Australasian Missionary College (AMC). College Board members wanted a curriculum without Shakespearian studies and one that did not lead to government examinations. Their best and leading teacher, Charles Schowe, however, had been government-trained along classical lines and resigned over the issue.¹ He then received an appointment to open a high school in Sydney in 1919 at Paterson Street, Concord, suburban Sydney.²

Church members enthusiastically patronized the school in preference to AMC. Ironically, Schowe's success was his undoing. Church officials closed the school in 1921 to encourage parents to send their children to AMC³ Later, some limited options became available in Sydney by extending the Auburn elementary school to include the first three years of high school.⁴

Burwood School



Sydney Adventist College, Strathfield, 1952.

Photo courtesy of South Pacific Division Heritage Centre.

A comprehensive fresh start began in 1937 with the opening of a secondary school at Park Road, Burwood. Known principals included Vince Pascoe (1938),⁵ George Currow (1941),⁶ and Gordon Mc Dowell (1943).⁷ Archibald Hefren replaced McDowell in 1947. Some other teachers during the 1946 through 1948 period included William Driscoll, Ernest Krause, and Stanley Louis. The school itself was simply a large private residence converted into classrooms. Occasional sports days took place across the road in Burwood Park.⁸

Strathfield School

In 1948 leaders purchased a larger property at 159 Albert Road, Strathfield, with ample space for classroom and sports area development. The Croker family, whose homestead remained on site, had previously owned it. After selling the Burwood property to the nearby Methodist Ladies College, the school shifted the classes to the former Croker residence as a temporary measure until the construction of a permanent facility. Administration made plans for a high school to accommodate 130 students. It would cost £30,000, a huge sum in post-World War II Australia. Some sceptical church members dubbed it "Butler's Folly" after Lewis Butler, president of the Greater Sydney Conference.⁹ The turning of the sod occurred in January 1951.¹⁰ Building materials were in short supply following the war but crews found enough to continue. Costs finally totalled £34,000. On January 11, 1953, the school officially dedicated and opened the single storey administrative offices and classrooms block. It was simply named Sydney High School. The first headmaster was Robert Parr¹¹ followed by Oliver Ferris (1954),¹² Lionel Turner (1955-1959),¹³ Archibald Hefren (1960-1962)¹⁴ and William "Bill" Veitch (1963-1974).¹⁵

The initial years of the Veitch era witnessed three extensions costing a total of \$108,000. They included the addition in 1966 of a second story to the original block spread across the front of the site, giving extra classrooms and an assembly hall upstairs. The school had 14 teachers at the time and a total of 240 students.¹⁶ Glynn Litster succeeded Veitch as principal, and during his time the school modified its name to Sydney Adventist High School.¹⁷

Arnold Reye served as principal 1978 through 1980, followed by Ross Ecclestone, 1981 through 1985.¹⁸ Part-way through Ecclestone's years the student body reached 470 students,¹⁹ near the peak of a little more than 500 annual enrollment. The 1970s and 1980s became remembered for their swimming and athletics carnivals and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme that involved bush orienteering and community service by participants. The latter was an extra-curricular activity supervised by science teacher Adrian Ellison. An annual highlight was the nationwide Mathematics Competition sponsored by the independent Australian Mathematics Association.

David Faull succeeded Ecclestone.²⁰ The institution adopted the title Sydney Adventist College in 1996.²¹ Principals Barry Wright (1999-2004),²² Murray Chapman (2005-2009)²³ and Julia Young (2010-2012) followed Faull.²⁴ Some felt that the original school motto, Nihil Sine Labore (Nothing Without Labor), was theologically inappropriate. The school replaced it with Nihil Sine Deo (Nothing Without God) to reflect a gospel orientation.²⁵

A gradual decline in enrollment to 227 in its final year (2012) preceded the closure and sale of the property. To the last the students participated in collecting funds for charitable overseas projects including a drive to collect Bibles for the Solomon Islands. They also held a monthly soup kitchen for the homeless.²⁶

The institution had served its purpose until the parents chose other schools closer to their homes. The investment that Butler and the Greater Sydney Conference placed in its establishment provided thousands of young students with a Christian education during its 75-year existence.

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