

Ron Gannaway Prize



Commenced in 1974 this prize is awarded each year at Valedictory Dinner in honour of Ron Gannaway who was a successful and very popular member of the College and was sadly killed in a car accident before commencing his first job after graduating.

It is awarded to an undergraduate member of the College who has, in the opinion of the College Club Committee, contributed most to the well-being of fellow students through endeavour, charity, companionship and consistent contribution to sporting and social activities, without necessarily having an outstanding achievement in any one field

Ron Gannaway (1948 – 1973), B Econ. DipEd. UNE

Ron was born in 1948 in Bendigo, Victoria to parents Peg (a nurse) and Fred (a CFA fireman). He had two younger siblings, Judith and Allan. He attended St Kilian's Primary School, the Marist Brothers' College (MBC) and he completed his secondary education at Bendigo High School. During his short life, he excelled in sports, leadership and being a decent human being.

Ron excelled at a number of sports. He won his age division swimming championships for successive years at MBC and was also senior club champion at the Bendigo East Swimming Club. He was an inaugural member of the Bendigo East Baseball Club's junior premiership team in 1961. He played baseball for a number of years as a very fine first baseman.

He had the distinction of being selected as MBC captain of Crane House in both Years 11 and 12. This was a rare acknowledgement of Ron's natural leadership skills, as historically only year 12 students were given the House captain honour. He also captained the MBC first XV111 in Australian rules and led the team to prevail undefeated in 1966 over prominent opposition sides. Further, he was awarded best junior basketballer in the Bendigo Basketball Association under 15's competition.

Ron also played two seasons of senior Australian Rules football for Bendigo Football League side Sandhurst, starting as a schoolboy in his first season. He was pursued by several AFL (then VFL) sides including Geelong, Carlton and Hawthorn. However, Ron was determined to follow his academic interests and thus enrolled at UNE, Armidale NSW. Curiously, he chose to live at Robb College in 1969 because he had a very good friend named Robyn.

Ron played basketball for both Robb College and UNE. Initially, he received a Half Blue Award for basketball in 1970. Then in 1972 he gained a Full University Blue Award for basketball which was presented to him by Dawn Fraser (See Photo).



Photo : Ron Gannaway awarded his Full Blue Award in 1972 by Dawn Fraser

Ron was selected in the Australian Interschool basketball side in 1972 and had ambitions to represent Australia in the Olympic Games.

Ron made many quality friendships in his time at Robb College and spoke fondly of his good times at UNE and Robb College. Ron mentioned also that he met the Queen during her visit to Robb College in 1970.

Sadly, after completing his Bachelor of Economics and Diploma of Education in 1972, Ron was tragically killed as a passenger in a car accident at Shepparton in Victoria on 29 January 1973, where he was attending a weekend Australia Day basketball competition. He had been appointed to start as a teacher at Ballarat College in 1973, but never got to take up the appointment.

His funeral at St Killian's Church in Bendigo was overflowing with mourners, which was a testimony to how highly loved and regarded he was. His school basketball team members formed a guard of honour at his grave site.



Ron's parents initiated the inaugural Ron Gannaway award in conjunction with Robb College to preserve his memory. Subsequent family members including his sister Judith and her husband Bruce have studied at UNE as has his brother, Allan's wife, Jennifer who completed a Masters of Education (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) in 2018. Jennifer also received a Vice-Chancellor's Scholar award the same year for her Master's degree. Each of Ron's extended family members was influenced to study at UNE because of Ron's positive experience and camaraderie at Robb College and UNE.

In summary, Ron was a very decent older brother and role model. He was brave and gifted in his sporting endeavours. He thought deeply and would discuss profound spiritual/philosophical questions with his religious mentors and his family and friends. Ron never found study and education easy but persisted tenaciously as he did on the sporting field. He had the courage of his convictions and whenever he perceived any social injustice, he was always prepared to speak up or intervene according to his conscience. It is hoped his achievements and qualities will be remembered and be a source of inspiration for those at Robb College and winners of the annual Ron Gannaway Prize.

(Allan Gannaway – July 2021)

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