

November 2021

LEA SERVICE AWARD

John Gerlach
**For Service to Lutheran Education
1973 – 2021**

The Lutheran Church of Australia thankfully acknowledges the faithful and committed service of John Gerlach to Lutheran education for 47 years of service.

John has made an extraordinary contribution to Lutheran education and the advancement of his community through almost five decades of service in the governance of Lutheran schools and early childhood centres on the Redcliffe Peninsula in Queensland.

Among many distinguishing factors his service is unparalleled in providing the source of consistency in the development of Lutheran schooling on the peninsula and northern Moreton Bay region. John grew with, and guided, the orderly emergence of Lutheran education in this region demonstrated by his governance roles firstly in the kindergarten, then in the primary school and finally into the college setting.

It culminated in John's remarkable 33-year term as Chair of Grace Lutheran College, during which time it expanded into three campuses: Rothwell, Caboolture and Googa Outdoor Education Centre. These campuses each reflect the Gospel as central to their work and life. John, who is also a long time member of the local Lutheran congregation has been keenly aware of the mission of Lutheran schools but also fostered close ties and strong support from families with other church affiliations. Together with its long serving Principal, Fred Stolz, John ensured Grace Lutheran College was welcoming to all, regardless of race, creed, or social status and actively reduced barriers to an education and experience in the community of Grace.

The longevity of John's service in senior positions of school governance; speaks to the talents and attributes that have served him and the Lutheran Church so well. John exhibits a patient consensus making approach to his leadership; allowing committee members ample time to navigate sometimes complex matters. Once a course was decided however, he exhibited the resolve and commitment needed to see initiatives and projects through to fruition. Some of the prominent hallmarks of John's council and committee work include preparedness, agenda management, and relational management exhibited by the long term stability of Grace Lutheran College Council.

Those who worked with John closely also speak fondly of his affable nature and dedication; "He also had your back" was among comments made regarding his loyalty to the principals with which he served. John by nature of his role as an educator by profession, also understood the intensification of educational leadership and respected the space that also needed to be afforded the principal. In his work on Council out of session business, it was always "two cups of coffee made just right in a China cup and saucer and then down to business."

John's faithful and conscientious service to his Lord and the Lutheran Church of Australia though his service in Lutheran education, had been outstanding and is humbly recognised through this Award.

Assoc Prof Lisa Schmidt
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