Tributes from the Trinity community
For Frank Henagan, 28 November 1933 – 6 January 2014

Penelope Pengilley (TC 1997)
Observation: Frank always impressed me as a very humble man who was gracious enough to set to one side the arrogance of youth and privilege. For him, it was an honour to serve; however, in his quiet way, Frank knew that he had something we all needed, even if we didn't appreciate it ourselves at the time. Perhaps that is a reason why he became so much respected as the years went by! He was a good man and he made the College a better place.

Sacha Senque (TC 1999)
Along with Taffy Jones and Warden Evan Burge, Frank was one of the senior Trinity figures of my 88-90 experience. Truly ubiquitous, an ever calming, reliable & protective presence, he was the ‘go to’ man in many a sticky situation because he was selfless in support of one and the whole, one of the College leaders, and part of the cultural fabric. Age was no barrier to the strong individual relationships he formed, nor to his well-known passion and contribution to sport and youth. The College experience will be lesser - at least very different - without him. That wry smile reflected in his eyes, one that belied a life of rich experience. He will always be well remembered.

Michael Golden (TC 2005)
Frank was well known by many for his rousing motivational speeches to the football team prior to important matches. A particularly memorable speech inspired the first XVIII to defeat Queen’s College in 2006 to break one of the longest winless streaks in Trinity’s history. Even well into his 70s, he could be seen participating in training sessions on the Bulpaddock. His presence will be sorely missed around the grounds of Trinity.

Matthew Horton (TC 1985)
I was very sorry to hear of Frank Henagan’s recent death. He, along with the indefatigable Arthur Hills, was one of Trinity’s enduring characters who touched the lives of every person who passed through the College’s gates over the past 40-odd years.

My memories of Frank are still vivid, but I particularly associate him with the Saturday mornings of my first year, which seemed to be invariably preceded by Friday nights at Naughton’s. The close proximity of my dogbox in Cowan to that establishment must have had something to do with it.
Anyway, Frank would usually find the dishevelled remnants of these fin de semaine celebrations loitering around the Bulpaddock awaiting the arrival of clarity and purpose. It inevitably turned up in the form of Frank’s fixed stare and a sharp question as to whether we had anything better to do with ourselves. The best answer to this was always in the affirmative. But even that was only a minor obstacle for Frank, who appeared to have reserved every Saturday morning for the movement of heavy objects. So, short of running away, Charlie Mosse, Roger Rasmussen and I would be regularly dragooned into lifting the piano around every corner of the Bishops’ building. Or beds in and out of rooms that always seemed to be up a tiresome staircase and behind very narrow doors. Or a complete rearrangement of the Dining Room.

Perhaps Frank had a higher purpose in this weekly retribution, but I can’t say it was very evident from his wry smile when his three conscripts would shuffle off at the end of the session ruing the night before, the day after and Frank’s pianos. I am sure Frank will be eulogised with many more worthy memories, but this was my favourite. Vale Frank.

Sarah Nosworthy (TC 1997) and former MUAC member

The funny twinkly look in his eye when he was telling a story. Reading the Herald Sun over breakfast at the same table at the same time every day in the Dining Hall. Him running up and down the hockey pitch at Melbourne Uni in impossibly short shorts, running faster than a lot of the athletes on the track! His pre-competition pep-talks before intercollegiate athletics, and his understated but complete delight when we did him proud, and bought home the 'cheese board' trophy (and our overstated delight when he so generously bought us all a round of beers at Naughton’s).

Philippa Duffy (TC 2004)

I’m incredibly grateful for Frank’s wise perspective and advice, especially while I was Senior Student. Frank had a wonderful way of increasing my confidence when I doubted myself, and yet quietly letting me know when an alternative path or decision was necessary. On a community level, Frank’s contribution to the College and the other communities he has served was remarkable. Indeed, it is something that I can only aspire to match.

Hugh Collins, Master of Ormond College 1994-2008

I am saddened to learn of the death of Frank Henagan, and offer sympathy to all – especially in Trinity College, Uni Blues and Uni Blacks, and Melbourne University Athletics – for whom he was such a steadfast support over so many years. In my fifteen years on the other side of the Ormond/Trinity fence, I came to value Frank warmly as neighbour and as friend.

‘Taffy’ Jones, another valued neighbour, hits the nail on the head in identifying 'help, advice and friendship' as Frank's trademark. Frank's help was given as quietly and generously to many an Ormond footballer as to the Trinity men he was coaching for so long.
Most alumni will recall the long-standing friendship of Frank Henagan and George Mounsey. Together they must have watched countless College and University games of football and cricket on Main Oval from their favourite vantage point under the tree alongside the old grandstand.

Finally, it has always seemed to me a mark of Dr Evan Burge's rare combination of acuity and benignity, and of the mutual respect between Warden and Porter in those years, that when Trinity College entered the digital era their server was named 'Frank'. So, indeed, he was. Vale Frank Henagan!

**Campbell Roydhouse (TC 1996)**

I am very sad to hear the news of Frank's passing. During my time at College, I considered Frank, like many to pass through Trinity, as a good friend. He was selfless in giving his time to many sporting clubs within Trinity and around the University, and a great supporter and mentor to many aspiring athletes including myself. My mother Liz and wife Sally also spent many moments with Frank watching the Uni Blues and Port Melbourne Football clubs on some very cold Melbourne days. Frank always helped to warm up those mornings with a joke and a smile usually over a cup of tea.

**Barbara Cargill, Dean of Pathways School Trinity College**

I have been here over seven years now, and I thought that I'd reached an important milestone recently when Frank finally gave me his first and only bit of direct feedback. Up until then, he'd scowled at me once or twice when I inadvertently sat in 'his' seat, and he'd grunted at me in lunch-table conversation, much the way he did with everyone. We'd only ever had a few serious, personal discussions, and I treasured those. He'd also waxed lyrical about many of my predecessors and their excellent or quirky management of TCFS, but he'd never breathed a word about what he made of me. I half-suspected that he thought I was perhaps not up to the task. Now I'd already worked out that Frank was pretty parsimonious with his praise lest one get a big head, so I wasn't dwelling on his stamp of approval, but when he finally said to me a couple of months back, almost an aside, almost muttered in amongst other things and not exactly fulsome, 'You've done a really good job with your area', I was quite bowled over.

I will miss Frank who will forever be a part of my memories of Trinity College.

**Adrian Farrer (TC 1992)**

When remembering Frank as our footy coach, the seminal words so often delivered at a break in play, 'Have confidence in your own ability', spring to mind. Of course, the words themselves did not come out quite so eloquently from Frank. It was more like, 'Have condence y'own bility', accompanied by a battery of spit that sent us to his left and right that was closer to it.

The words were delivered crouched, hands on knees, his wiry frame swaying with each thought. Then he would pace, his deep thoughts forming prior to each
phrase, delivered at the top of his four pace arc, prior to another pause, the next arc and the next statement.

His methods worked. Frank coached us to a premiership in 1994. If I remember well, there hadn’t been one for 30-odd years and I suspect there has not been one since. I remember at the end of the game, with celebrations wildly underway, he swiftly made his way over to John Kanis, coach of Ormond, to shake his hand. That was a wonderful example of sportsmanship – something that defined Frank – but it would have been his quiet triumph too. He would have been proud of being our coach that day. We were proud of him.

Alan McLean, Director of Sport and Physical Recreation University of Melbourne (1994-1999)

One of my most pleasant duties when Director of Sport and Physical Recreation at the University (1994-1999) was to submit Frank for candidature as Life Member of the Sports Union. I did so based on a unique joint submission by three Clubs - the Football, Cricket and Rugby Union. I was delighted to see the recognition granted on recommendation from the Blues Awards Committee. Frank was a tough taskmaster for all of us at Melbourne Uni Cricket Club, doing interval training, always watching our feet for a sign that we were starting to struggle.

Just prior to his 80th birthday, I showed him a copy of an old programme I had retained from the Bendigo Thousand Foot Race of 1968. As a 13-year old schoolboy I had attended. In the old programme I found Frank’s name in the field for the mile. He was thrilled to see this memento of his professional foot-running, as it was called. He would have been 35 at that time. We talked through the names of his competitors, many of whom I knew or knew of.

I did not meet Frank until about 1975 or 1976, so have known him just short of 40 years. I will always remember his verbal sparring with University oval curator Ernie Cropsey, all conducted against a backdrop of deep personal respect. When Trinity won intercollegiate football for the first time for many years in 1979, Frank was coach. The excitement of and for Frank was a warming and lasting image.

One of life’s great genuine characters and contributors. Vale Frank.

Peter Tregear, Former Dean of Trinity College

Trinity College gave Frank Henagan a home and an ever-growing family, and I know Frank was forever deeply grateful to it. In 1993 the College also gave me a home, the first of two happy periods of residence, and over the next two decades I was fortunate enough to get to know Frank well.

Looking back, I was a probably a marked man for he knew in advance that I was a keen middle-distance runner! Little did I know then just what an extraordinary life Frank had had in athletics during its undisputed ‘Golden Age’ in Australia. I soon discovered that he was also an inspired coach who, above all, never asked an athlete in a training session to do more than what he was prepared to do.
himself. Actually, he often could do a lot more! Age seemed indeed not to have wearied him, nor the years condemned.

Frank became for me, as I know he was for many others, also a valued and important mentor, particularly when I returned to the College as Dean in 2006. His advice was unerringly shrewd and his knowledge of the inner workings of the College uncannily well informed! I have, it is true, also the occasional memory of him being treated poorly by some College students, who took the sometimes slurring speech and the very character of the caretaking duties he did tirelessly on their behalf as something not worthy of their full respect, or, worse, some kind of invitation to tease or deride. If only they knew, however, just how acute a judge of character he was. Whatever the obstacle he faced, however, he never failed to honour the work or - as he would say in one of his famous coaching session - 'perform to the best of his ability'.

His life was, indeed, a model of charity and sacrifice; and so many who passed through the College or through the various University sporting clubs to which he contributed, came to be touched and inspired by it. Many I know left the College and the University hoping to emulate at least something of his example of public service in their own lives. For that reason alone, Trinity College and Melbourne University has lost not just one of its most loyal employees and generous volunteers, it has also lost one of its finest educators.

Most certainly, I have lost a dear friend. Vale, Frank, you will be greatly missed!

**Paul Denborough (TC 1980)**

Dear Frank,
You were a very caring soul, but I'll never forget your half time address of 'kick it to Denborough'. Rest in peace.

**Beng Kai Victor So (TC 2008)**

I think College has lost a man with a big heart. Frank was the man you see committed to fitness. When you didn’t have the motivation to get out of your room on a cold morning, all you had to do was look at the Uni track to see Frank running in the cold, rain or shine. With that, it would make you want to go down to the track to join him and keep fit. If it wasn’t for Frank, I think I would not be as fit as I am today! Frank is a Legend!

**Paul Cherry (TC 1983)**

I will always remember fondly the interest that Frank took in my career as an umpire with both the VAFA and AFL, during my time as a student and tutor at Trinity in the 1980s and early 1990s. He was always very encouraging and never afraid to put in a good word for me with the powers that be. I can still remember him, early one Saturday morning in January, standing beside the University athletic track, watching me in a group of AFL umpires run a pre-season time trial. I was the only one of the runners with any connection to Trinity, but Frank made the effort to come out and watch.
Frank was a pivotal part of the Trinity culture by always being himself and, therefore, providing a piece of reality to what could have become a very ‘unrealistic’ elite academic environment.

I was very sorry that, due to work commitments, I was not able to attend Frank’s 80th birthday function, but I was able to call in at the College a few days afterwards and wish Frank all the best. Although probably not having seen me for at least 15 years, Frank hadn’t changed and was very interested to hear my latest news. He obviously had truly appreciated the function and for how many people had attended.

As I am sure is the case for hundreds, if not thousands of students, Frank will for me, be one of, if not the most, abiding memory of my time at Trinity.

Richard Divall, Queen’s College 1997

I would like to pay tribute to Frank Henagan.

I knew him, albeit from Queen’s College from 1977, and he was always an exemplary and committed supporter of the student body, and loyal employee of Trinity College.

He will be missed, and Trinity has been well served.

Louanne Lyle Holmes (TC 1974), one of the first eight women in College

It is a sad time for Trinity and for all who have lived in these hallowed halls of residence while working their way through tertiary and postgraduate studies. Trinity was our home during those years, and Frank - one of the solid, steady and levelling influences and affectionately regarded elders - was always there to be counted on.

I remember Frank Henagan as one who has inspired us by asking little of life, giving a lot and being himself.

Chris Watkins (TC 1997)

If Frank knew your name you’d made it. It took a couple of years generally, and you wouldn’t know until he’d stand next to you at a JCR event or a sporting match one day, and say hello. I remember the feeling of pride. You’d been recognised. You were all right. He was like that, moving through the College with a quiet word here or there, maybe he’d say ‘well done’ on something he’d seen you do, or maybe, if you thought you were getting carried away with yourself, he’d gently take the mickey. He never used more words than he had to.

I remember him calling me aside in a football match after I’d handballed to the opposition or kicked it backwards or something. He pulled me aside and said ‘do you know what you did wrong?’ Yes Frank, ‘don’t do it again’. A pat on the back.
and you were back on the field. Not a bad philosophy that. It didn’t matter that you’d made a mistake, it mattered whether you had learnt from it. It wasn’t just sport, he had view on how our West Side Story performance compared to the one he had built the sets for twenty years back. He could name every Senior Student and had a word or two on their performance. As he moved around straightening furniture and a thousand other thankless odd jobs, he straightened us up a bit too, made you feel like you belonged. Vale Frank.

James Brew (TC 1989)

Frank had a great appreciation, of course, for the talents of the sports men and women of College. He appreciated talent and heart in athletes. Yet he also had an equal appreciation for the unique characters that College threw up. Those people that perhaps did not stand out in the fields that he was most responsible for, but that stood out ‘left of field.’ In particular, where residents created the kind of chaos that could be made right and put back together and could become a shared anecdote.

It was a joy to give Frank a perplexed chuckle. The training runs. Those open invitations to sprints on the oval. ‘Work harder’. ‘Jeez’. I sometimes say ‘work harder’ to my children when they are playing sport.

No matter his accomplishments there should be no hiding that his road to Trinity had been difficult. Consequently, being College Porter meant a great deal to him. The value that he placed on College was surely reflected in the ministry and community of College. It was not that Frank was part of the infrastructure of College, but that to many of us interactions with him were part of College life and so part of the life of College. It is just not possible to divorce Frank from the mix that made College what it was.

I liked seeing Frank again last year after being away from home for many years. We did not so much shoot the breeze, but shot some old lines. Alternately fighting long dead battles, probing College life with genuine care and ending with a laugh. ‘See ya later’. I wonder that, with his passing, that for many of us whether our link to College has just become closer.

Angus Trumble (TC 1983)

In the summer of 1983–84, I worked with Jeremy Gaden on the Leeper Library stock take. Later, Jeremy ran away and joined a circus, but through those few hot months we labored together in the stacks pores over cards and call numbers, climbing ancient wooden ladders, ingesting the dust that rose from the Greek fathers. Happily, at morning-tea time, Evan Burge summoned all the staff, no matter how lowly, for morning tea in the Dining Hall. Today I have been chuckling at the memory of that congregation of very remarkable people, surely as different from each other as it was possible to be: Arthur Hills, Helen Brown, Alfred Bird, Evan himself, Jean M. Waller, John Gaden, and Frank Henagan - now, alas, all of them gone.
Thankfully many others remain, and will, I am sure, attest to the spice in the mixture. I still treasure Jean’s many, mostly outrageous postcards, but residues of Frank are harder to pin down. I really knew him only later, in connection with the Senior Common Room, by which time he had emerged, as it were, from under Arthur’s wide shadow, and seemed positively garrulous compared with former days, all things being relative.

Frank’s courtesy, gentleness and discretion made a big difference to the neat resolution of many small human dramas, most of which shall never again be mentioned. Indeed it is difficult to think of anyone at Trinity who has touched the lives of so many.

Yet Frank also brings to mind the famous passage at the end of *Middlemarch*: ‘Her finely-touched spirit had still its fine issues, though they were not widely visible. Her full nature, like that river of which Cyrus broke the strength, spent itself in channels, which had no great name on the earth. But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.’

It could never be said that Frank led a hidden life, nor indeed that his tomb will be unvisited - on the contrary - but those bits about having an incalculably diffusive effect, and the growing good of the world, both ring mighty true for dear Frank Henagan. May he rest in peace.

**Roger Rasmussen (TC 1985)**

How could I forget athletic season training on the oval? As ever ‘How was that Frank?’ would be met with his combination incisive stare and wry smile. More recently, I returned to find him in lycra trousers praddling around Behan looking for someone to help him lift laundry. Fortunately old age (on my part) provided sufficient camouflage to prevent one last Frank dragooning.

Like Arthur he will be fondly missed.

Vale Frank and thank you for the fond memories.

**Ron Noone (TC 1974)**

Frank was a remarkable presence around the Trinity campus. Frank's enthusiasm for and obvious love of the place endeared him to the legions of students who moved through the College. He will be greatly missed and remembered with great fondness.

**Bill Traill (TC 1953)**

A giver to the College community of inestimable value. Frank will be sadly missed.
Stewart Gill, Former Dean of Trinity College

Frank was a useful sounding board regarding the students at Trinity as he acted as a bridge between students and staff. He always had his ear to the ground and very few associated with Trinity had his length of engagement with the College, which always made his advice well sought. He was an outstanding Director of Sport, and a friend to many staff and students – at least after he decided to smile at them!

Michael Traill (TC 1979)

Like so many whose lives he touched through the intersections of College and sport, I will remember Frank as a mate - more often than you would give credit for at the time, - a mentor and very frequently an increasingly wise old sage. I was privileged to have connections to him through footy, umpiring, athletics and College. In truth I know I will share with very very many a sense of closeness to Frank because he had in such radiant abundance the twin qualities of authenticity and perceptive interest in who you were. Add to that a platinum grade b/s detector, and you have a man whose influence and presence will live with all who knew him.

Andrew Webb (TC 1982)

I am so sad to be unable to attend Frank's funeral on Monday, as I am currently overseas with the family. What a special man he was to so many of us and I will always remember him dancing at my 21st birthday party many years ago!

Julian Smith (TC 1987)

Frank taught me that a circle has four points. He also taught me that pairs of threes do indeed exist. He taught me that there can be humour in everything. He taught me the value of friendship. But most importantly he taught me to respect and value wisdom and that wisdom is earned through hard work and experience. Frank's toil, experience and humility yielded a wisdom that many took solace in and grew from.

Many thanks to you, Frank.

Charles Clark (TC 1980)

Naturally I am sad and shocked to hear of Frank's passing. The last time I saw him was at the Carol service and he seemed in good form chatting about the various merits of any of the Clarks who had played football at Trinity.

Although not a footballer, I got to know Frank more from his athletics connections and every now and then, while jogging around the University athletics track, would stop and have a bit of a chat and he always asked after us all. Even later and more recently I would see him at Athletics Victoria club competitions when he helped with the University athletics team.
It was wonderful to be able to attend Frank's 80th birthday celebration and see the great affection and respect, all who were there that night, had for him. Certainly the end of an era for the College, and now there is one less reason for returning to Trinity.

Frank you will be sadly missed, see you later mate.

**Alexander Cameron (TC 2001)**

I remember the first time I saw Frank Henagan. It was O Week 2001 and the TCAC led us into a candle lit dining hall, where the rest of the College had formed a guard of honour to ‘spoon’ us in. At the end of the hall, in the Warden's chair, sat Frank, who, in typical fashion, didn't look overly pleased to be there.

Frank's legendary status meant he was somewhat intimidating to Freshers. However, as soon as Frank discovered that I was playing football for Uni Blues he and I became firm friends. We quickly bonded over our shared love of the game. I played for the Uni Blues under 19s, where Frank and his old mate Alan Salter were the “brains trust'. I have many fond memories of the post-match dissections of the game, which invariably would end with Frank and ‘Salts' abusing each other.

Coming over from Adelaide, I didn't really know much about College football or what it entailed. Our first match that year was against traditional rivals and reigning premiers, Ormond. Ormond had a team of stars, while we had the customary Trinity assortment of several good players, a core of battlers, supplemented by a few rugby players and an American exchange student or two.

We gathered before the game in the JCR. Frank proceeded to give one of the most inspiring speeches I have ever heard from a coach. He outlined his football philosophy: play man on man football, win the ball and beat your man. Characteristically, as he got more worked up his face contorted as he struggled to force out his words, but this only served to underline the feeling behind them (I later learnt that this was due to a speech impediment which Frank had struggled with during his childhood and teenage years). Regardless, by the end of the speech the rag tag bunch of young men in the JCR were transformed into a team, ready to run through brick walls for their coach. Against the odds, we led the Ormond side for the whole game, until an indiscretion led to one of our players being sent off. We lost by 5 points.

Frank grew to be a great friend of mine. In him, I found a figure who shared the outlook and sense of humour of other mentors from my youth. Our conversations would invariably start with an exchange of insults.

‘You're getting fat’ was his usual greeting, to which, I would usually express my surprise that he was still alive. However, underneath the gruff veneer, Frank was a perceptive and sensitive man. When I was unwell with glandular fever in first year and confined to bed for weeks, he would check on me everyday and bring me my meals. ‘You're too hard on yourself, that's your problem,’ he would often say. I would brush this off at that time, but it turned out to be amazingly prescient. Like his reductionist approach to football, I didn't appreciate a lot of his wisdom until I was much older.
During our time at College, we renamed the football club ‘The Frank Henagan Football Club’ and dreamt of repeating Trinity’s historic 1994 premiership. But it wasn't to be. Although in 2002 we were one win away from a spot in the Grand Final, a narrow loss to Ormond cost us again!

I spent many hours with Frank over my four years at Trinity, and many more thereafter. Whenever I found myself in Melbourne I would ring Frank to see if he was free to meet up. His phone manner left a lot to be desired and invariably he would always begin by saying that he was too busy to fit me in. But we would always end up going for a ‘quick’ coffee that would end up lasting two or three hours. I never tired of Frank’s stories, even the ones I had heard many times. He was a unique storyteller - his narrative would meander so much that he (and I) would forget the point of the original story. Some of my favourite Frank tales concerned the 1994 premiership, where his favourite, Gil McLachlan, still had cotton wool packing in his nose well into the celebrations at Naughton’s. His memories of training with legendary coaches Franz Stampfl and Percy Cerruty during his own athletics career were fascinating.

As I got to know Frank better, I was privileged to find out more about his early life and the vicissitudes he had overcome. I was also struck by the way in which Frank took great pride in the achievements of the countless Trinity students, footballers or athletes that he had befriended over the years. I imagine his funeral will be packed with these people, from all walks of life, who, like me, were touched by Frank's unique and unwavering friendship.