



23 June 2017

Term 2 - Issue 3

# Benoni High School

## From the Principal's Desk.

Dear Parents,

And so the time has finally arrived after 27 years to say goodbye to this my family of Benoni High. It has been an unbelievable honour and a privilege to be the headmaster of such a wonderful school. Looking back, I don't know if it is easier to say goodbye and leave or to say goodbye and leave you.

This is indeed a tough day for me and as a principal and teacher for many years, I came to realise that although we are the ones that are supposed to teach you, you have taught me just as much.

You taught me that every single person in our school can be a leader. You never said it to me outright but you never had to. You showed it in your actions every day. Your kindness to me and each other inspired me. You taught me to be willing to take risks. It not always have worked out exactly as you wanted to but that trying and not achieving total success is better than not trying at all.

You taught me that a pat on the back is always better than a slap on the wrist. You taught me about having pride in yourselves. The way you dressed and carried yourselves always filled me with a sense of pride.

To our parents, I want to thank each and everyone of you for all your support and for entrusting me with your children. I am honoured to have been given the opportunity to be part of the Benoni High family. I have had the opportunity to foster relationships with you and will cherish the wonderful memories and friendships I have made during my time here. Know that my dedication to my position as your principal will continue as we transition to new leadership. I remain dedicated to the school and will assist if needed wherever I am asked to do so.

One of the real strengths of Benoni High and in fact of any school, is its staff. Our staff and teachers are second to none. They are experienced, professional and caring and have made my work at Benoni High much easier during sometimes very difficult and challenging times.

Our pupils never cease to amaze me. They are creative, energetic, thoughtful, kind and resilient. I am going to miss them, their hugs and handshakes, their jubilation at winning and tears when losing. I have indeed been fortunate to have been part of their lives.

Education is facing a difficult future during, what are, politically charged times. To see this through, the school will require firm, strong, committed and visionary leadership. All change brings with it a certain amount of uncertainty and this School Governing Body has been tasked with the responsibility of appointing the new Principal who must have the necessary qualities needed to lead, motivate, to inspire and to improve Benoni High.

More importantly, it must be someone who will be committed to the pupils of this school, who will nurture, care for and love this family we call Benoni High.

I look forward to seeing the school grow from strength to strength. Even if I am not there, I will be cheering everyone on from the sidelines and I am sure the best things for Benoni High are still to come. We have a solid foundation to build on and I will ensure that when I leave everything will be in place for next year and that projects started will be completed.

It is my hope that I leave the school better than I found it. I realise everyday how lucky I am to have been part of something so hard to say goodbye to.

Sitting at my desk writing this last letter to you, I look back to where the school was 27 years ago and where we are today and I realise that I have been fortunate to be part of tremendous changes at Benoni High during the last 27 years. I would like to mention the previous Chairman of our School Governing Body – Mr Tommy Chalmers, who has remained a loyal and good friend to me and to Benoni High School and who did so much to assist the school in the development of our infrastructure. Mr Chris Webster for his unbelievable professionalism and his total commitment and support of and support of Benoni High School staff. During their tenure we built the "Vatican", the school chapel, the entire new office block, car ports, fencing, the school cenotaph, development of our sports facilities and upgrading of the school hall, the gym and the grand stands, walkways and gardens, the auditorium and four new classrooms, to mention but a few.

Our new School Governing Body under the chairmanship of Mr Robert Brons continued in the same vein and I must single out Mr Havemann for designing both the magnificent Sports Centre and three new classrooms, Mr Harrison who managed the projects and also to the School Governing Bodies both past and present for the unbelievable difference they have made in the lives of the Benoni High family. We often don't get the opportunity to say thank you publically and I would like to take the opportunity of doing so now.

The school has grown from strength to strength. We have not lost the 'A' Section Inter High Athletics for 27 years, and all our other extra curricular activities, pipe band, drama have excelled.

With the introduction of rugby, it brought a new dimension to the school and we now compete in the "Big School League" where we do very well.

We have an unparalleled academic record.

I can't tell you how difficult it is to describe how sad I am to be leaving. When I got here so many years and I would never have realised how connected I would be to such a warm community of people and unbelievable children who have become so much part of my life. The welcome support from Mrs Leach on my arrival as a new Deputy then secretary to the Principal has not wavered. If ever there was someone who not only knew where everything was and how the school's administration operated – it was her. She also knew the "moods" of the staff and how to read them. Mrs Webber or "Hitlery" as she was also known, formed part of an unbelievably strong and close knit top executive and the two of us formed a formidable team and a close relationship which endures. To Monica, my secretary for so long, words cannot adequately describe my thanks.

In a week's time I will wake up to a new life, full of yet to be realised things to do and empty of your company – I will be in a strange limbo.

My wife said to me when I told her I was leaving – "don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened."

In closing I would therefore ask that you remember me with smiles and laughter for that's how I will remember you.

To quote Shakespeare who is a better "wordsmith" than I am:

"And whether we shall meet again I know not,

therefore our everlasting farewell take, for ever, and for ever farewell friends If we do meet again, why we shall smile If not, why, then this parting was well made".

So until the next time, farewell and God Bless.

J V CERONIO

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