



## Valedictory Speech 2021

Good evening and welcome ...

The Valedictory Dinner is one of the most important events in the St Ann's year.

It's an evening for celebration and reflection. Celebration of the many wonderful times we've shared ... and reflection on what we've achieved individually and collectively.

And what a year it's been. One like none of us have experienced before – one which no one of us could have anticipated.

Leading into this year, the spectre of COVID-19 loomed large over us.

All of our lives have – and will be – changed by the events of this year, we've not only been able to hold almost all of our scheduled sports days and events but we've once again twice in three years won the HTC .

I am so proud of the way we have collectively and individually managed in this trying time. I am acutely aware that for many of our students it has been a very long time since they have seen their families. I do hope that we as your second family have helped you feel a little less alone.

First thing this morning, as I woke, I reflected on our collective good fortune to be sharing the St Ann's experience – and, from a purely personal point of view, how lucky I am to be here with you.

I'd like to pay tribute to the Tutor and College Club teams – many of them will leave us in just a few weeks and I should ask you to join me in showing your appreciation of all the work they have undertaken during the year.

Running this college comes with its challenges - and it would not be possible without the support of the Tutors and College Club, particularly this year. You have been extraordinary leaders and have made us proud.

This College benefits enormously from the work of the Tutors and College Club – they are effectively my lieutenants; please know that I have complete trust and faith in you.

For some of you this is your first Vaedictory Dinner. For others, this – sadly – will be your last. But it's an event which, I trust, will allow you to acknowledge the important role St Ann's has played in your tertiary education and your personal growth.

Most important of all, though, are the lasting - and even lifelong – friendships you have formed at St Ann's.

In this college, we aim to create a warm, generous and inclusive culture.

My mentor, Bill Spurr, believes an organisation's culture is most graphically illustrated by the way its people are welcomed and farewelled.

For newcomers to the college, I hope we have welcomed you into the St Ann's community in suitable style – and tonight, let's make sure we say an appropriate farewell to the friends who will soon be leaving us.

For the Ann's students who are leaving, I know I speak on behalf of all of us when I say, we know you will go far and do well in the world and that we are proud to say we have known you.

We will follow your progress to dizzying heights with enthusiastic interest.

And, of course, you will always be welcome to come back and see us.

We in turn pledge to you that we will continue to collectively uphold the values you embody and ensure that St Ann's College goes from strength to strength.

Thank you and good luck.

**Denise von Wald**  
**Principal and CEO**