Rhodes to success at Indooroopilly

Principal, Mr Brendan Cahill, Queensland Rhodes Scholar, Amanda Rojek and 2012 College Captain, Brigida Corte-Real.

Brigidine College past pupil, Amanda Rojek, Senior of 2003, is the 2012 Queensland Rhodes Scholar.

Dr Rojek took time to share her ‘story’ with the young women of Brigidine. Post school options can be confusing for any student. But when you have one of the most prestigious scholars in the state as a role model, her advice is worth hearing.

In her own self-deprecating way, Amanda joked that Brigidine College’s teachers kept her on the ‘straight and narrow’ however she only really came to school every day because she loved to play soccer! On a more serious note, she always knew that she wanted to study medicine. Mr White, a former Brigidine teacher and Amanda’s soccer coach recalled that “Amanda was academically talented but more importantly caring and helpful. Whatever she did, she did well.” After graduating Brigidine College, she studied Bachelor of Applied Science (QUT), then Honours (UQ) and is now completing the internship for her Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery (UQ).

“You choose your future,” Amanda reminded the girls. “It doesn’t matter what OP you get. You are already incredible women who will change the world. Just work hard and follow your passions.”

Amanda has worked in rural Queensland, Rwanda, New Orleans, Haiti and many other challenging environments in the world. “My advice is: love your work and believe in its importance. Take opportunities as they arise.”
Those powerful messages resonated with Senior students who couldn’t resist using words like “awesome” and “amazing”. One Senior encapsulated Amanda's impact - “She is very empowering. Amanda made me feel like I can take on the world.”

When asked of one fond memory of Brigidine as a student, Amanda did not hesitate to say “the friendships.” “Friends keep you grounded and remind you where you come from” she said.

Amanda is at Oxford University in 2013 undertaking a Master of Science in Global Health Sciences.

When Cecil Rhodes established the Scholarship in 1903 he hoped that “recipients would improve the lot of humanity.” With her plan to apply her knowledge and find practical, workable solutions to disaster management and relief in the world, Amanda is fulfilling Rhodes’ plan. She is also demonstrating to the current generation of Brigidine’s ‘strong and gentle’ women that ‘success’ is all about working hard for others and choosing your heroes from real life. “They remind you of the person you want to be” she concludes.

Additional notes:

- Rhodes Scholarship selection committees seek young men and women of outstanding intellect, character, leadership and commitment to service.
- Notable Australian Rhodes Scholars have included: Bob Hawke, former PM, Sir Zelman Cowan, former GG, Justice Elizabeth Hollingworth of the Supreme Court of Victoria, Rebecca Richardson, Indigenous Youth Leader
- Amanda is passionate about bringing adequate and timely healthcare to struggling and underprivileged communities. She most recently volunteered in Chicago, for Habitat Humanity in New Orleans, and for the International Red Cross as an Emergency Services Volunteer in Australia. This suits her as she “enjoys emergency medicine” and “an environment that is unpredictable.”
- In addition to studying and volunteering, Amanda likes to hike and mountain climb. She has trekked to Mt Everest Base Camp and climbed the summit of Mt Kinabalu in Borneo. She still enjoys play futsal and netball.
- **THE PRINCE ALBERT TROPHY** – This Trophy (pictured above) was bought by Dr LJJ Nye of Brisbane and given to the Secondary Schools of Queensland in 1961 as a trophy for interschool competition. It was intended to encourage young people to strive for perfection and realise that the qualities most needed for progress are intelligence, good health, courage, stamina and kindliness. The Trophy is displayed by the school of the Rhodes Scholar for that year. There is a little booklet housed in a ‘secret’ drawer at the bottom of the trophy. It records the name and school of the Queensland Rhodes Scholar for each year. Brigidine College Indooroopilly congratulates Amanda on creating College history by being our first Rhodes Scholar.