

Chris Topp 2/68 (Wal Hall, David Buckley, Bill Turner 2/68, Mandy Anderson and Neil Leckie 3/68)



Christopher Broughton Topp was born on 24th April 1946 at Bowral, NSW and completed his secondary education at Kings School, Parramatta, NSW. He attended the Australian National University and Graduated as a Bachelor of Arts in 1968. Before entering the Army as a National Serviceman he was employed as a teacher by the Department of Education in NSW. Chris graduated with Class 2/68 on 10th October 1968 and was posted to the RAASC for Corps Training at the RAASC Centre.

Trish Topp advised the OTU Association through 2/68 Classmate Wal Hall that Chris had passed away on 22nd June from Secondary Melanoma.

Chevalier College Website posted: “Chris Topp commenced teaching at Chevalier College on 31 January 1976. An extremely capable and inspiring teacher, Chris did not take long to earn the admiration and respect of his students and peers alike. These qualities and affections travelled with Chris for the entire 35 plus years in which he dedicated himself to the ‘family’ of Chevalier College. This was exactly half of his life span. Chris was instrumental in introducing young people to the value of personal challenge through his work in Wilderness courses, Duke of Edinburgh programs and the love of all things literary, historical and geographical. His organisational skills combined with his amazing empathy for others made him the obvious choice for the role of Deputy Headmaster/Principal in 1993. Chris held this position until 2003 when he decided to return to his love of classroom teaching in a part-time capacity. Chris officially retired in 2010 but returned to the college in various consulting roles.

In 2013, after being approached by the MSC Provincial, Chris took up the role of Chairperson of the Chevalier College Board. Chris again excelled in this role. His intimate knowledge of the ‘Heart’ of the college meant that he was fully attuned to the strategic future and the ethos (essence) of the school and its place in the Southern Highlands. Chris continued in this role until his diagnosis of ill health in April 2015. In November 2015, despite being very unwell, Chris was able to attend a gathering of the College Board where he was presented with the highest award of the college – The Esprit du Chevalier medal (the spirit of the knight). Over the years, Chris Topp taught, mentored and led more than 19,000 students, teachers and parents and community service personnel. He was active in his local community through volunteer work such as: Mt Gibraltar Landcare, Friends of Sturt, the Sturt Pottery, Films in the Southern Highlands; and in guiding local people on various bushwalks. He was loved, respected and highly

valued by all with whom he came into contact.”

Chris had connections with several Scheyvillians including Classmates David Buckley through David’s wife and Barry Anderson who graduated with Class 3/68 through Barry’s wife Mandy who worked with Trish for about 20 years. David said: Not surprising that Chris took on the adventure training program. I heard that Trish used their new-born first child as a teaching aid to try to give her teenage male students some understanding of parenting and nurturing. Not bad for a couple of History teachers. Trish is a person who projects calmness and peace.

From Bill Turner:



Sadly, I turned to the 1968 photograph of “Junior A Class” – twelfth intake of National Servicemen, which hangs on my office wall and noted that Chris sat next to me in that photograph taken in May 1968. Alphabetically, the latter part of the alphabet have to wait together for their “turn” at whatever and so a kind of “end of the alphabet” crew developed among the Topp-Turner-Wyman-Whiteford-Waldeck. I remember Chris in the short time that I knew him as an articulate athlete, a fair dinkum good mate. Vale Chris Topp. 17

Mandy Anderson: Chris’ funeral was delayed until Friday 15th July 2016 to allow family to return from the UK. It was held at McGrath Hall, Chevalier College. The hall was filled almost to capacity as hundreds of friends of Chris and Trish from many contexts of Chris’s life came to farewell a wonderful teacher and community and family member, and to share the loss that Trish and family were suffering. The coffin and the foyer of the hall were decorated with beautiful native flowers and proteas to reflect Chris’s love of the wilderness. Many of Trish’s teaching friends and colleagues were also in attendance. The music was led by an ensemble of fine voices. Tributes were delivered by members of the church, the college family, Scheyvillian Wal Hall, members of the local community LandCare group, ex-students, family and friends. Trish delivered a fitting and moving eulogy, with poise and eloquence about Chris’s life, of the family and their life together, of his 35-year career at Chevalier, and of all of his many interests, most recently his love of pottery – faltering only when describing the final time as his illness began to take hold and the inevitable had to be accepted. Members of the congregation reminisced about their own part in Chris’s life as a selection of wonderfully nostalgic slides was shown. Scheyvillians David Buckley, Winston Bucknell, Wal Hall, Dave Knaggs, John Marsden (all 2/68) and Barry Anderson (3/68), made up the OTU contingent in attendance.