



SUPREME COURT
OF QUEENSLAND

Opening of the enlarged and re-dedicated
J B Adams Memorial Library
Anglican Church Grammar School, Prep School
Wednesday 24 March 2010, 10am

The Hon Paul de Jersey AC
Chief Justice

The nineteenth century English politician and barrister, Augustine Birrell, once remarked that “Libraries are not made; they grow”.

It is a particular delight for me, as an Old Boy, to have the opportunity to open this splendid new expression of the J B Adams Memorial Library – truly a growing library.

When I first heard Churchie had secured a \$3 million grant from the so-called “stimulus” monies, I wondered about its disposition on this campus already so brilliantly equipped. That it was deployed into a library, and especially a library to spark particularly young minds, was very reassuring.

At the Supreme Court, we boast a superb library which attracts national acclaim. We regard it as a research powerhouse for the court and the profession.

I expect the boys and staff of the Prep will regard this transformed library not only as a research powerhouse, but even more fundamentally, as a powerful driver for intellectual and creative development.

Observing Churchie over the decades since I matriculated with the completion of Senior or year 12 in 1965, I have been frankly astonished, and extremely proud, to witness the development of such an aesthetically functional campus. To my eyes, everything about it is first rate; and the development continues. Only last year Churchie recorded their best OP results in the school’s history. Hard won achievements such as this over as many as 92 years of development present as nothing short of spectacular, and there are many



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people who deserve commendation for that, especially in the case of the Prep School, the treasured benefactor and old boy Stanley Smith.

It is interesting, looking at the Prep School today, to recall its origins at the Cathedral School in 1918; then from 1922, its five year occupancy of the residence called “Rollo”; from 1927, “Palmyra”, now the site of Morris Hall; and then from the mid-sixties, this excellent facility, the Prep Schoolhouse including the J B Adams Memorial Library.

How fitting it is that this splendid iteration of the Library should continue to bear the name of John Brandon Adams, first assigned to the Prep Library in 1951 when it resided in “Palmyra”.

“Poley” Adams as the boys knew him – though not to his face, was the Master in charge of the Prep School from 1939 until his death in 1950. He not only maintained the Prep School during the difficult war years, but was able to foster its development. As an illustration, in the decade of the forties, enrolments lifted from 91 boys to 193 boys. His formidable contribution was acknowledged by Canon Morris in these eloquent words:

“What a real hero he was. May God reward him as he deserves. He had all the great primary virtues; loyalty, courage, kindness, patience, endurance, modesty, integrity. His devotion to duty was tested as though he were a Christian martyr...the Prep School must owe him more than it owes anyone else...the boys have had an example of a strong and good man, who hated meanness and shuffling and shoddy work and pretence.”

There is no doubt those who manage modern libraries must think laterally. The days are long gone when a library could be confined to hard copy with a manually maintained catalogue. Modern libraries must reflect modern phenomena. This is important now more than ever before in this blue-tooth, wi-fi and Facebook era. I need mention only Google Books, aiming to catalogue some 16 million volumes; and Harvard University’s digitization of the 16 million volumes in its library, a library assembled over as long as four centuries,



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and now adapting to the electronic age, an age where the natural inclination of the boys will be to look first to the computer and online databases.

This fine facility equips the School brilliantly to present a library which, while educating, will interest, excite and enthuse 21st century Prep boys; as in his own very effective way did John Brandon Adams for the Prep boys of the mid-twentieth century.

I am delighted and privileged now, to declare officially open, the enlarged and re-dedicated J B Adams Memorial Library.