

**Speech by Dr Don Markwell,  
Warden of St Paul's College, The University of Sydney,  
at a "farewell dinner" in St Paul's College Graduate House,  
Monday 16 September 2019**

I would like to thank both Antone and Mark Elliott for their very kind remarks this evening.

Yesterday morning I ran into Behz, and after we had agreed what great fun the double bill of "Jack" and "Trial by Jury" was, we agreed that we were very much looking forward to tonight. But Behz described tonight somewhat dauntingly as "the last supper".

Quite apart from the fact that you are all invited to the farewell dinner in Hall and the service in Chapel on Thursday night, I prefer to think of dinner here tonight in somewhat happier terms!

For one, it gives members of the College Council and members of Graduate House the chance to meet each other, and that is a good and happy thing.

And, as for me – well, even though this is one of the last occasions I will be in Graduate House as Warden, which unavoidably brings the sadness of farewell, it is still impossible for me to be here in Graduate House without a spring in my step and a real sense of excitement. What a remarkable community has been created here under the leadership of Antone and Emma and now dear Flora Martinho-Truswell – a remarkable community of postgraduate students and academics, women and men, of diverse disciplines, from around Australia and from many different countries. The special warmth of this community is something I feel every time I set foot in this building, or see members of Graduate House around the College.

This is a truly and palpably a residential academic community of talent, positive energy, warmth of welcome, creativity and mutual support of a kind that is not only a jewel in the crown of the College and of the wider University of Sydney, but that merits comparison with the best in the world.

That is what the College set out to create, and that is what together all of us have been achieving.

It has been a joy for me to be present at the creation of this community. The decision to create Graduate House was made by the College Council long before I came to St Paul's – in fact, a delegation from the College had visited me at Rhodes House in Oxford during the early planning stage as long ago as 2011, when they were seeking ideas for a world-class postgraduate community. It never occurred to me that I would years later play some role in bringing that community to life.

When I started here early last year, this building was a dusty building site which could only be entered wearing a hardhat and accompanied by the builders. The wonderful fresco by Garry Shead that graces this refectory – is it of the last supper? – had not been thought of, let alone created. No Dean or Associate Dean had been appointed – what a find it was to secure Antone as Dean, and now Katie as Associate Dean! – and no students or academics had applied to come here, let alone been admitted.

So tonight, instead of thinking of this dinner as the last supper, I prefer to think of the burst of creative energy that has brought this community into being as the miracle of Graduate House. Tonight gives me a chance to thank the College Council for the decision to create it and their continuing guidance, to express again my gratitude to Steve McMillan without whom this vision would not have come into being and to many others who helped bring it about, to thank Antone, Emma and Katie (and Flora) for their brilliant leadership, and to thank every member of Graduate House for being part of this very special community, including for supporting each other – and for your warmth and support to me as Warden. I could not be more grateful.

I believe that in years, perhaps decades, to come we will all have reason to look back on the fact that we were all – at least for one brief shining moment - present at the creation of something quite remarkable, and to look back with gratitude and pride that we were here.

Thank you so much, and God bless.