



# 30 Years at Ridley

*By Kerrie Stevens*

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On a cold and wintery June day in Melbourne, the sun managed to shine through briefly as Ruth Weatherlake joined a crowd gathered to acknowledge and celebrate her 30th anniversary as Ridley College librarian. Somehow, the secret had been maintained and Ruth was completely unaware, and surprised at the fuss being made of her. Family, friends, and colleagues, old and new, gathered for a celebratory lunch at Ridley College in early June 2022 in honour of Ruth's dedicated and long-time service.

Ruth's contributions would be well known amongst ANZTLA members over the last 30 years – ARI editor, statistician, numerous conference host roles, and more. And this was not a farewell, rather a 'well done' for many faithful years of service. Ruth plans to be at Ridley for some time yet...

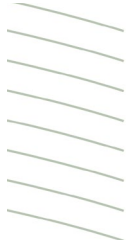
The following picture shows: Kathryn Duncan (formerly Ridley & Whitley College Libraries, now at Swinburne University Library), Kerrie Stevens (Alphacrucis University College Library), Ruth Weatherlake (Ridley College Library) and Tony McCumstie (formerly Catholic Theological College Mannix Library, currently working a few hours a week at St Mary's Seminary in Camberwell - the formation house for the Oblates of Mary Immaculate – and the monastery library at St Francis Church in Lonsdale St in Melbourne).



Ruth's colleague, Alison Flynn, penned this poem which aptly sums up Ruth's commitment, longevity and generous attitude whilst serving at Ridley...

### **So Glad We're Not Ruthless**

Dear Ruth, our beloved Birthday Elf:  
So quick to celebrate others' joys.  
You're not the only one to keep a secret –  
We too have conspired (with no regret)  
To plan a surprise without any noise;  
Today is the day when you yourself  
Are the centre of all our loving attention  
As we laud three decades of your utter devotion.



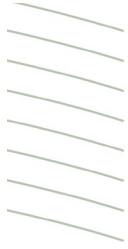
We've gathered today to celebrate you,  
and reflect on all your remarkable ways.  
Daughter, sister, mother, and friend,  
librarian, colleague, mentor and saint!  
Tigers fan, dog-sitter, bibliophile,  
Generous encourager, and quick to praise.

As to your achievements, though vast and innumerable  
Let's start with the one most obvious of all:  
This library, the Leon Morris Memorial,  
which stands here solid as a log,  
To decades of your skill, expertise and hard slog  
As you've added year by year to its catalogue.

Word by word and page by page,  
Book by book and shelf by shelf...  
This august library at every stage  
Displays an abundance of theological wealth.  
And its patrons – students and academics worldwide –  
Are a testament to its academic health.

Renovations, innovations, automations and more,  
aided by prior colleagues galore,  
and now by your very own Alison and Harriet,  
(and a retinue of students who've shown promise and merit);  
You've presided over changes a-plenty,  
And argued for every single penny  
Spent on updating Leon's many stores.

Lindsay has been your trusty confederate  
In budgetary planning and execution;  
and CFOs (both past and present,  
greying or balding under the stress)  
Have bowed to your passionate elocution  
When defending the value of every expense.  
But let's not forget your absolute scruple  
When accounting for every one of those costs;  
Bruce may have discounted those 14 cents missing,  
But we bet you're still trying to find that loss!

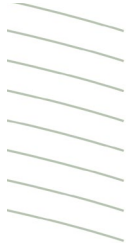


Let's take a look at some of the milestones,  
Major achievements along the way.  
After five long years of painstaking labour  
The original card catalogue was put away.  
Richard wrote a liturgy, and a certain threesome  
Threw the cards heavenward to suitably attest  
The end of the outmoded card index.  
Spool forward some years to the recent refurbishment:  
Boxes were packed, stacked and moved yet again –  
The task monumental was at last declared finished:  
Bright-coloured fixtures, and the grand Gravitas;  
And we're glad that you've come to appreciate,  
After measurements painstaking, accurate and exact-as  
The installation, despite some misgivings,  
Of the large and well-oiled rolling compactus!

And it can't be neglected, on this glorious occasion,  
To make special mention of the work that's been done  
Over two gruelling years of a ghastly pandemic:  
To ensure that no student fell behind in their study  
And could access each resource their academics prescribed  
Our librarians three with cheer and good humour  
Scanned, packed and posted books right to their sides.

So much more could be mentioned in praise of this woman,  
Who goes extra miles in word and in deed.  
Just ask any colleague who is gasping for coffee  
How much they appreciate Ruth's daily stride  
To fetch her strong beverage, and others' in need  
Each time she perambulates to nearby Parkside.

She brings out her iron and board every April  
To press the regalia of graduates' proud;  
She makes jelly slices and soda-lime-bitters  
She mixes up drinks for the Wednesday night crowd;  
She organises lunches and cakes and festivities,  
She records Ridley weddings and babies (and yet,  
Despite hints administered both broad and subtle,  
She still doesn't have Obadiah and Obadette!)



Of these thirty years I have only known twelve,  
But twelve years, or twelve months, or twelve days are enough  
To see for oneself that this redoubtable woman  
Is truly made of the sternest stuff:  
She's beloved of our faculty, students, and staff,  
She's full of fun sayings and many a laugh;  
But by far most important, and of this we're all sure  
By her godliness, wisdom, integrity and more  
She reflects God's goodness right to her core –  
thank God for the thirty...here's to thirty more!

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