

New Form Plaques

Editor's note: Using a grant from the Form of 1973 Mentor Fellowship, SPS Archive Assistant Lisa Laughy, who moonlights as a woodcarver, has been charged with reviving the form plaque project. The project was initiated in 1921 by Fourth Rector Samuel Drury and carried out by original woodcarver John Gregory Wiggins, who memorialized School history in wood from 1921 to 1953. Production of the plaques ceased in 1990 – until Laughy's proposal to reignite the tradition in the spring of 2010. The printing of these plaque descriptions in Alumni Horae returns to another tradition of introducing the completed panels to SPS alumni in the pages of the magazine.



1996

The central design, celebrating the development of the Humanities Program, is represented by an owl perched on a book, with pen, pencil, and brush behind it. The owl is a symbol of wisdom, and the pen/pencil/brush symbols represent the arts and literature. The book the owl is perched on is a symbol for learning; it represents the merging of history, philosophy, and religion in the humanities curriculum. In the upper-left corner an 'at' (@) key from a computer keyboard is carved to symbolize the first School-assigned e-mail addresses for students. The upper-right corner of the plaque has a closed book with initials DVH, representing the end of Tenth Rector David Vern Hicks's Rectorship. In the lower right section, a female symbol with the Roman numerals XXV inside represents the 25th anniversary of co-education at St. Paul's School.



2001

The central design of the plaque, symbolizing the November 2000 presidential election, shows a ballot from Florida – complete with hanging chads – being claimed by both the Democratic donkey and the Republican elephant. The shield in the upper-center of the carving features an element from the coat of arms of the Henley-on-Thames Town Hall, representing the crew's trip to England that June to compete in the Henley Regattas. The crossed sword and torch represent the Sixth Form senior prank, inspired by the movie *Braveheart*. The Blass Clubhouse is carved at the bottom-center of the plaque, representing the redesign and rededication of the original clubhouse, which was built in 1893. Lord Fermoy's clock is shown in front of the clubhouse.



2006

The central motif of the plaque is an adaptation of the St. Paul's School Sesquicentennial logo, with St. Paul in the center surrounded by the four shields – pelican, book, sword, and the Episcopal Church. A scroll ties them together horizontally with the dates 1856–2006. In the upper-left of the plaque is an open book with the initials WRM, representing the beginning of William R. Matthews's Rectorship. The book symbolizes the Rural Record, a journal of day-to-day life at St. Paul's School, kept from 1857 into the early 20th century. The upper-right corner represents the spiral of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated New Orleans and the Gulf Coast just prior to the beginning of the school year. The bottom corners are carved with spiral waves representing the damaging waters of the flood in May of 2006 that resulted in the School's closing three weeks early.



2011

In 2011, the revival of the Club Cup competition was the big event of the school year. The cup itself is represented in the center of the plaque with the symbol above it of the winning club, the Delphians – the Greek letter Delta surrounded by a laurel wreath. In the upper-left of the plaque a closed book is carved with the initials WRM, representing the end of William R. Matthews's Rectorship. The book symbolizes the Rural Record, a journal of day-to-day life at St. Paul's School, kept from 1857 into the early 20th century. The upper-right corner holds a map of Japan with circles radiating from the epicenter of the devastating earthquake and tsunami that occurred in March 2011. The lower left and right sections of the plaque represent the crew competing at the Henley Royal Regatta in June 2011. A shield superimposed above and to the left of the crew features an element from the coat of arms from the Henley-on-Thames Town Hall.