



CBC Mount Edmund
FAITH | LEADERSHIP | EXCELLENCE

OUR COLLEGE HISTORY

On the 8th of September 1922 CBC Pretoria opened its doors to 56 young boys. It was dedicated to St Gabriel which distinguished it from the other CBC's dotted around the country and indeed the world.

In 1968 the College relocated to its present campus due to the expansion of the University of Pretoria. Once it moved it seemed appropriate to rename it, hence it became known as Mount Edmund, on a mount. Today we are proudly known as CBC Mount Edmund, in honour of the founder of the Christian Brothers Congregation, Edmund Ignatius Rice. CBC Mount Edmund has been steadfast in its value-based education from the laying of its foundation stone in 1921 by The Reverend Cox. This foundation stone is still part of the current building at Mount Edmund.

We have also held onto the name of the original school by naming our Primary School Block St. Gabriels. The College has always maintained a culture of inclusivity: it was the first boys' school in Pretoria to open its doors to students from all races. In the spirit of inclusivity, the College also expanded in 1994 to include both boys and girls. CBC Mount Edmund is the only Combined Catholic School that is co-educational in Pretoria.

St Gabriel's (1922-1969)

Bishop Cox and the priests of Pretoria were anxious to have a Brothers school established in the Administrative Capital. Early in 1917 both Bishop Cox and Father Ryan, OML, Parish Priest of Pretoria, wrote to the Superior General offering to secure a site for the school if a staff of Brothers could be promised. On this understanding the site on Lynnwood Road adjoining the University was purchased from Mr Johan Rissik.



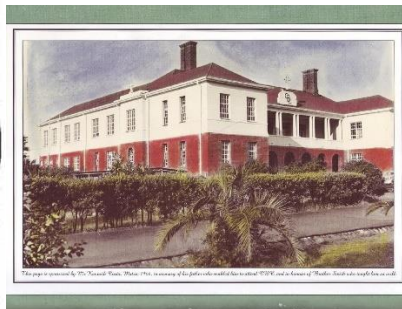
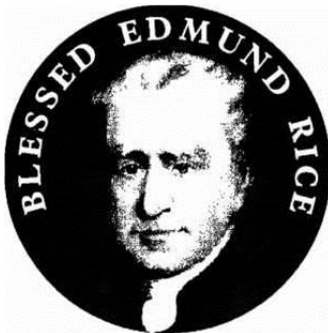
CBC Mount Edmund

FAITH | LEADERSHIP | EXCELLENCE

Father Ryan OM, and other friends had collected the purchase money: Bishop Cox also contributed. The Brothers themselves were responsible for the erection of the College building and seven years later for the Brothers residence.

The college was designed by the well-known Pretoria architect Mr. Rees-Poole and the builder was Mr. Pattison. The architects of the Brothers residence was Messrs. Cowin, Powers and Ellis and the builders the firm of Clark & Downie (Pty) Ltd. It was not possible to begin the building of the college until 1921. Br. Barren, then residing in Kimberley, had much to do with the plans and Br J.J. Mullan, the founder of the Kimberley College, superintended the construction work. During this period Brother Mullan stayed at the Monastery next door as the guests of the Redemptorist Fathers.

Bishop Cox on Trinity Sunday 1921 laid the foundation stone, and the new college was dedicated to St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows who had been recently canonised. The official name was Christian Brothers College St. Gabriels (CBC St. Gabriels). The original foundation stone recording this dedication has been incorporated in the present College at Mount Edmund. The new college was due for opening in January 1922 but as it was not found possible to have the required staff of Brothers on the spot by that date the opening was postponed to the following September. On 31 August 1922, a week before school started, Brothers Hayes, Enright, Duggan and McKenna had arrived from Ireland. These, with Brother Mullan as principal formed the first staff.



PICTURE OF THE FIRST INTAKE 1922. (Previously unpublished)



CBC Mount Edmund

FAITH | LEADERSHIP | EXCELLENCE

The day chosen for the opening was the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady, 8 September 1922 and twenty-five years to the day from the date of our first opening in Kimberley: 8 September 1807. Father Hayes CSSR. Rector of the Monastery said Holy Mass in one of the college classrooms at 6.00 am. and then proceeded to bless the Brothers' house and the classrooms. The admission of pupils began at 8.30 am and by 10.30 all the classes had been formed and were in their appointed classrooms. Most of the work of this first day consisted of dialogue.

On the opening day there were 56 pupils — the small number being due to the unusual time of opening — but by the end of the year the registration had reached 90; in January 1923 the number had reached 160. An advantage of this late opening was that it gave the new staff the opportunity of studying the South African education system and deciding on the course of studies for the new school year of 1923. The classes in 1923 ranged from Standard Three to Junior Certificate of the University of South Africa. It was decided to introduce the College of Preceptors (London) examinations as they were then being taken by practically all the private schools in South Africa. In 1923 the College's Pretoria campus entered pupils for the Lower Forms, Preliminary and Junior Grades — the Senior Grade followed in 1924. The results of all these examinations were such as to merit from the editor of the Christian Brothers Educational Record the following comment:

“St Gabriels College, Pretoria is rapidly getting into its stride. This year, the second of its existence, 70 boys entered for examinations. The results which are detailed elsewhere in the Record would do credit to a long-established school”. Bemhardt Klagsbrun took first place in the British Empire in the Junior College of Preceptors. In 1925 the College presented its first class for the Matriculation Examination of the Joint Matriculation Board. In the second year of the Colleges existence the Annual appeared. In the mid-1960s the University of Pretoria urgently required our property to expand and offered an alternative agricultural site of theirs near Silverton. On 14 March 1968 Br Leopold Kennedy turned the first sod at Mount Edmund, the new CBC.



CBC Mount Edmund

FAITH | LEADERSHIP | EXCELLENCE

On 31 July 1968 the foundation stone was laid by Archbishop Gardner, and the following month, on 21 August, the contract was signed between the College and the University of Pretoria for the taking over of the new site at Mount Edmund. In January 1960 the Brothers moved into the new residence and travelled daily to the old college. In July 1960, their term began in the brand-new college at Mount Edmund, the present site, and in the following January the first boarders arrived.

Mount Edmund 1969-2002

Christian Brothers College moved to the campus at Silverton, known as Mount Edmund, in honour of founder Edmund Rice. The move to Silverton, necessitated by the expansion of the University of Pretoria, provided a great opportunity. Br. Smith was able to re-house a mature college with wonderful traditions in a modern environment. As the new principal, Br. Thackaberry, was to say in his 1970 report: "One realises that buildings, no matter how imposing they may be, are merely a shell, and that the worth of a school is estimated by the calibre of its staff and of its students both of whom I am happy to say are among the best".

The renaming of the College as Mount Edmund was the result of the Christian Brothers' re-examination of their origins and mission. The following is an account of the last day at St Gabriels, on 27 June 1969: "In casual dress boys and staff prepared, in cool weather, for the move out to Mount Edmund Books, papers, desks, chairs, tables, scenery and statues were piled high on half a dozen lorries, kindly lent by parents. Everyone lent a willing hand and by 12 o'clock a last cup of tea had been drained in the old staffroom. Only a few papers, swirling in the wind, were left behind. The accumulation of 40 years had disappeared from St Gabriels".



CBC Mount Edmund

FAITH | LEADERSHIP | EXCELLENCE



Br Oneill, CFC, was appointed head of the college in 1985 and he served for three years. In March 1986 he highlighted the direction that the Brothers were taking: “The Education System in South Africa has been troubling the Brothers of the Colleges around the country for quite a number of years, but as yet we have not been able to come up with a satisfactory solution. Different viewpoints exist; our white schools are helping to maintain black schools for which no government aid exists, so we must maintain the status quo: release more Brothers from the privileged schools so that they can help the materially poor and replace them by Catholic lay teachers or more radically to close down the schools for the materially well-off and free the Brothers for work among the lesser privileged and finance it from the sale of our properties. A middle of the road solution is being followed, a gradual withdrawal is taking place, and the aim is to stimulate the Catholic Spirit of our schools so that in years ahead they can be handed over to Catholic laymen who will continue the schools as genuine Catholic Schools”.

Br McCarthy, CFC, the Last Brother to head the school, was in charge from 1988 until April 1991. Parental advice on school matters was sought and this democratization, although alien to some proved to be a harbinger for what was regarded as normal in the late 1990s. In 1991 the colleges first lay Headmaster was appointed. After 14 Christian Brothers at the helm, Mr. David Olivier was selected to guide the fortunes of



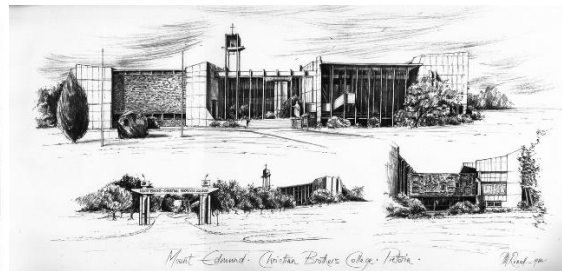
CBC Mount Edmund

FAITH | LEADERSHIP | EXCELLENCE

the college until his resignation in December 1996. He had been educated by the Marist Brothers at St. Josephs, Rondebosch, and later taught there. The college's numbers reached a low of 350 scholars because of the economic climate and the opening of Model C schools by the government. During his tenure as headmaster, the college became co-educational, a girl's hostel was opened and classes from Grade 0 were established. The college reacted proactively, and despite the proposed cuts in the state subsidy and the regrettable hike in fees as a result, the college roll for January 1997 stood at over 600 learners.

27 JUNE 1969

LORRIES ARE PILED HIGH WITH DESKS. ALONGSIDE THE COLLEGE RISES THE NEW DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA



In 1997 Mr. EJ Brown was appointed headmaster and the College wrote the first Independent Examination Board matriculation, obtaining 41 subject distinctions compared to the 0 achieved with the GDE matric exams the previous year. During Mr. Brown's tenure, Hotelkeeping was introduced, the Design and Technology Center and four extra classrooms were erected. After many hours of careful consideration, it was decided to close the Hostels at the end of 2000 due to both management and financial difficulties as the number of boarders had declined as parents were able to obtain schooling closer to home.

Mr. Peter R. Ross was appointed headmaster in 2002, the year the college celebrated its 80th birthday and the bicentenary of the founding of the Christian Brothers Order by Blessed Edmund Rice.



CBC Mount Edmund
FAITH | LEADERSHIP | EXCELLENCE

Mount Edmund 2002-present

A new management team was put into place in 2002 to carry the College into the future. In 2003 a committee was set up under the auspices of the Board of Governors to determine the future needs of the College and the best utilisation of space. A decision was made in 2004 to start with the implementation of the Development Plan. Thirty odd years of dormitory space was demolished to make way for the new building. Mr Colin Scott from BILD Architects, Mr Gordon Brittz from the College and other members of the construction team saw to it that the transformation materialised, and the College was able to make full use of the new modern and functional facility. Integrated accommodation was provided for the school psychologist, occupational therapist, and other support personnel. The renovated building was then renamed St Gabriels in order to remember the original school. The Aftercare Centre was an area that also saw great improvement in 2004, It was now run as part of the College, rather than as a private, outsourced undertaking. The learners who required afternoon supervision received nutritious lunches and homework assistance.

The next phase of the Development Plan made provision for the new Media Centre to replace the library. The PTA donated funds at the end of 2006 for the provision of computers and software for the new computer rooms. The Media Centre relocated from the High School block to St Gabriels during the Christmas vacation of 2006 and was opened to borrowers two weeks into the first term of 2007.

In 2005 a Garden of Remembrance was built in honour of Brother Dillon. This expanded to include a Wall of Remembrance for those in the community who would want their ashes to be laid there. The College changed their examination body from the Independent Examination Board (EB) to the National Examination Board in 2006. Over the years, the College has seen a consistent rise in pass rates remaining true to the vision of striving for excellence.



CBC Mount Edmund

FAITH | LEADERSHIP | EXCELLENCE

On a spiritual level, year themes incorporating Gospel values have served as a focus providing direction and spiritual depth throughout all areas of school life. The posters placed in all classrooms reminded staff and pupils of the many ways we can reach out in love and compassion to others. These year themes have often been 'what past pupils have commented on when they return.

On 19 January 2009 it was with a great sense of enthusiasm and joy that Little Mount Pre School opened its doors to the first nine children. By mid-year, numbers had increased to 16. The official opening and blessing were held on 12 March the building and play garden were blessed by His Grace Archbishop George Daniel

2012 was a special time in the college's history. This was the year the goth anniversary of the school was celebrated. college Chaplain, Fr Peter Switala, made mention of two focal points during his sermon commemorating the occasion; Our Lady and Blessed Edmund Rice. Our Lady has always been closely intertwined in the History of the Christian Brothers he said and "When CBC boys and girls use their privilege for the betterment of their fellow human beings, that's when we see that Blessed Edmund Rice has mysteriously been at work".

For many years the college has gone by various names. It has always involved some combination of Christian Brothers (CBC) Pretoria Mount Edmund. After much discussion it was decided that the name would be CBC Mount Edmund. The Christian Brothers brand has been kept, but by only using the abbreviation, it is hoped that people will not think that girls are excluded. The most important part of the name is that the founder, Edmund Rice is honoured. The mission statement also saw a change. It is encapsulated into three words: Faith, Leadership, Excellence. Headmaster, Mr Peter Ross mentioned that while the names may have changed, the fundamental essence of the College remained the same.

The College pool is a major asset It has undergone various changes, the most recent was in 2012 when a "Lean to Swim" pool was added to the precinct.



CBC Mount Edmund

FAITH | LEADERSHIP | EXCELLENCE

Over the years the matric group have always had the privilege of having their own space. This has often resulted, through wear and tear, in it looking more like a dust bowl in 2015 a new and improved Matric Garden was blessed by Archbishop George Daniel. The Matrics now have a secluded space in which to relax, meet and interact with each other. In 2003 when Management sat down with Mr Colin Scott, who was also a parent at the College and created the Master Plan for improvements, there were several problems that needed urgent attention. One of the identified problems was the traffic congestion that was experienced by parents on a daily basis, particularly in the early mornings. The biggest problem at that stage was the cost of making such improvements and there were other priorities at the time needing attention. Finally, on the occasion of the Colleges goth Birthday, a proposal was unveiled to the parents and staff. The proposed plan was put into action in stages, with the Foundation Phase play area being used to build the first loop. The rest was completed in 2015, The final stage of this project will be to fence the school off from the road and have a gate system that will control all access so that the College is able to protect all who work on the property.

With the passing of Brother Harkin in 2015, the Community had to make a difficult decision about the future of the Brothers at the College: For the first time in 30 years the College no longer had any Brothers living on the property. The Headmaster of the College mentioned that his passing had brought an end to an era.

With the change of the headmaster in 2017, CBC Mount Edmund had its sights set on affiliating with ISASA. We saw the benefits of a membership with such and organisation as an opportunity to network with like-minded schools through our staff attending the professionally administered workshops, seminars as well as conferences offered by ISASA. Being part of ISASA, to us, means that we are moving in the right direction towards ensuring our college keeps abreast with best school practice and professional development.



CBC Mount Edmund

FAITH | LEADERSHIP | EXCELLENCE

As an independent school, we believe that our main call is to put the needs of our children first. Despite the challenges that may arise, our learners' success is the driving force behind our existence and that is why we are able to structure our teaching and learning program that are tailor-made to fit our college. Every child has a talent whatever it is, we will find it.