



HILTON COLLEGE

A letter to

Old Hiltonians

Quarter 2 / 2020



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Dear Old Hiltonians,

Almost 100 years ago, in January 1921, disease forced the closure of Hilton College.

An outbreak of Enteric Fever tragically claimed the lives of five boys and threatened the very existence of the school.

In its almost 150-year history, this was Hilton's darkest hour.

When the school re-opened in April of that year, numbers had dropped by over 40%, and had it not been for the loyalty and generosity of parents and Old Hiltonians, the school would not have survived this shock. It was this devotion and self-sacrifice that allowed the school to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary the following year, in an atmosphere of complete confidence in the future.

Enteric Fever, like Coronavirus, is largely preventable and, fortunately, the proactive measures already taken by broader society and the school itself, mean that we are unlikely to suffer the same consequences as those poor boys of 1921. Nevertheless, the economic consequences of Covid-19 will have a seismic impact on a great number of the Hilton community.

Like that generation that lived through the horrors of the Great War, the Spanish flu and the tragedy of Enteric Fever, now is our time to support one another.

I am happy to report that a spirit of community and purpose is evident in the Hilton family as witnessed by the explosion of conversations taking place on digital platforms such as WhatsApp amongst groups across all generations. We live in the digital age and, as the school embraces online learning, so, too, are Old Hiltonians leveraging digital channels to stay in touch.

This past weekend a 60+ year reunion had been scheduled for the 1954 – 1961 school leavers. Sadly, this much anticipated event was cancelled due to lockdown. Nevertheless, this did not stop the likes of Monty Brett, Roger Don-Wauchope and Peter Thorburn from arranging an e-reunion on Zoom with the support of the Advancement Office. The event was well attended, as captured in the image below.



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The purpose of the Old Hiltonian Club has always been to engender collegiality amongst Old Hiltonians and friends of Hilton College. The Club aims to uphold and perpetuate the good name and reputation of Hilton College, and importantly, to contribute to endowment raising initiatives in support of the school.

In fulfilling this mandate, I would like to make you aware of the following:

Advancement Office

“Friendship Raising” and “Fund Raising” are no longer part-time activities for great institutions like Hilton College. Leading schools around the world all have dedicated teams that advance their cause - Hilton is no different. The school’s Advancement Office is staffed as follows;

- **Director of Advancement – Amanda “Quagga” Thorburn** has recently been appointed to this position and is ultimately responsible for all matters related to collegiality and endowment. Amanda has a strong accounting background and a wealth of business experience. Amanda can be contacted at advancement@hiltoncollege.com or at +27 (0) 83 212 8328.
- **150th anniversary co-ordinator – Brett Armstrong** has recently been appointed to this position and is ultimately responsible for all matters relating to the school’s 150th anniversary celebrations in 2022. In addition, Brett will drive a number of other initiatives aimed at strengthening the bonds of friendship amongst the Hilton family. Brett can be contacted at 150@hiltoncollege.com or at +27 (0) 82 774 5835.
- **Alumni Relations Manager – Amanda Pistorius** continues in her invaluable role of managing the alumni contact information and intelligence gathering. Amanda can be contacted at database@hiltoncollege.com or at +27 (0) 72 872 9357.
- **Events co-ordinator – Carolyn van Zuydam** has been appointed to support the arrangement of reunions and other events held at the school. Carolyn can be contacted at events@hiltoncollege.com or at +27 (0) 79 887 7241.

The Advancement Office is housed in the flag tower of the Campbell Building with magnificent views over the Karkloof, possibly the best office space in all of South Africa! It is well worth paying the office a visit and being treated to lunch in the school dining hall.

Communication Channels

Hiltonians are encouraged to contact members of the Advancement Office directly, but should also be aware of the following official channels of communication that exist;

- **Facebook** – Hilton College - @hiltoncollege1872
- **Instagram** – hiltoncollege1872
- **App** – Hilton College KZN - downloadable as normal - (Login using Alumni@hiltoncollege.com, password is HC2020)
- **Website** – www.hiltoncollege.com
- **WhatsApp** – approximately 50 “year groups” exist – please contact Brett Armstrong to be added to your year group
- **Magazine** – available to Hiltonians either digitally or in hard copy
- **LinkedIn** – see Old Hiltonian Club
- **Newsletters** – usually from the Headmaster, Chairman of the OHC and occasionally from the Chairman of the Board
- **Switchboard** - +27 (0) 33 383 0100

Please make an effort to use some of the social media platforms as there is a wealth of information, stories and magnificent images that is shared through these channels.

Although immensely effective, digital communication and, in particular, social media present significant risk to both institutions and individuals if inappropriately used. Please exercise discretion when using these channels of communication.

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Business Networking Platform

Since my last letter, numerous Old Hiltonians have voiced their support for a proposed digital networking platform that helps facilitate business interactions amongst members of the Hilton family. Such platforms are commonplace at equivalent schools around the world. Investigations are underway as to what an appropriate solution may look like. Please contact Amanda Thorburn – Director of Advancement - if you would like to provide input into what an appropriate solution should entail.

150th anniversary of the founding of Hilton College.

In 2022, Hilton celebrates its 150th year of existence. This is a significant milestone by South African standards and an opportunity for both celebration and reflection. A tremendous amount of planning is going into ensuring that this milestone is appropriately commemorated. During the course of this year you will continue to receive further details on what is being planned.

As a reminder, the major celebratory events will take place from **27 April 2022 to 02 May 2022**. Please diarise these dates – this will be a once in a lifetime opportunity for all Old Hiltonians. Please contact Brett Armstrong at 150@hiltoncollege.com or at +27 (0) 82 774 5835 should you have any questions pertaining to the 150th anniversary celebrations.

Oldest living Old Hiltonian.

The search is on for Hilton’s oldest living old boy!

The school’s database records Michael Aronson, aged 93, who left Hilton in 1942, and is now living in Nairobi, as the oldest living Hiltonian. Should you know of anyone that could dethrone him and lay claim to this title please let the Advancement Office know.

As they say, “it’s an ill wind that blows nobody any good” – the silver lining to the Coronavirus cloud may be that we are all reminded of what is most important to us. I sincerely hope that Hilton College is on your list.

In conclusion to my second letter of 2020, let me again invite you all to come and visit Hilton when the lockdown ends!

Until then, keep safe.

Yours sincerely,

Anton Jooste – Chairman, Old Hiltonian Club

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