

# PAST STUDENT LEADS CANCER BREAKTHROUGH



Professor Mark Dawson, Class of 1992 graduate

## **PROFESSOR MARK DAWSON SALESIAN COLLEGE CHADSTONE CLASS OF 1992, YEAR 12 GRADUATE**

**Past student and leading Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre clinician-researcher, Professor Mark Dawson's ongoing commitment to learning and innovation is 'leap frogging' our understanding of cancer; transforming prevention and treatment to save and extend lives.**

Today, Mark is the Program Head for Haematology Cancer Therapeutics and also leads a group of researchers in the Cancer Epigenetics Laboratory at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. His research focuses on identifying new therapies for acute myeloid leukaemia (AML); a disease which holds a poor prognosis.

But it's not all laboratory focused. Mark balances his time in research with human patient contact; "coupling curiosity and compassion" remains his priority - reiterating his fundamental belief in "looking after others". His attitude and motivation is fuelled by his drive and desire to "know why we can't cure this disease - it's not good enough just to accept this".

This driven, academically gifted and socially conscious man hasn't just arrived at this place.

Post his years laying the foundations at Salesian College Chadstone, it has taken around fifteen years of dedicated tertiary learning.

Studying an undergraduate degree of Medicine at Melbourne University and further study at Oxford University in the United Kingdom placed him in perfect stead for one of eight General Sir John Monash Award scholarships in 2006 and an invitation to study his PhD at the University of Cambridge.

In an effort to give back to the country that holds the strongest emotional tie, Mark has returned to Melbourne with his wife, Dr Sarah-Jane Dawson, also a leading clinician-researcher working at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, along with their two sons.

Mark acknowledges the instances that changed where he is today, going right back to his time on the College grounds twenty-four years ago. He smiles and positively reminisces about the three key teachers who motivated him at the critical points in his Year 12 to ensure he reached his potential.

Mark recognises that he often reflects; "They were able to extract from me the very best, by encouraging my self-belief, my steely determination to achieve, succeed, and extend myself beyond what I thought was wildly possible. I wonder where I'd be if I hadn't met those people."



Heather and Fred Dawson accepting son Mark's 2016 Hall of Fame award

## 2016 HALL OF FAME

We are committed to recognising and celebrating our current and past student's achievements, long after they officially leave our classrooms. On Friday 18 March, 2016 we formally recognised and celebrated the contributions of Salesian College Chadstone Alumni who have achieved significant success in their chosen fields of service and who act as positive role models for current and future students.

This year, we inducted Professor Mark Dawson for his contributions to Medical Research into the Hall of Fame, alongside three other significant contributors to our community; Andrew Wood, Philip Bretherton and Michael Henry.

Mark's parents Heather and Fred Dawson accepted the award on Mark's behalf.

*"Mark is a great son, and we are very proud of who he is. First, as our son, and then of what he has achieved. Mark by nature is a very competitive person. No challenge is too big for him. He explicitly believes in himself, and that anything is possible... We are aware of the old adage, that the school is an extension of the home. The school enforces what is built at home, and today we see the fruits of all the hard work that has gone into our children's lives.*

“  
They were able to extract from me the very best, by encouraging my self-belief, my steely determination to achieve, succeed, and extend myself beyond what I thought was wildly possible.”

- Professor Mark Dawson,  
Class of 1992 graduate

*"As wonderful teachers, you may not realise that all good teachers have good parental qualities. But as good parents we realise that we don't have exquisite teaching qualities like yours. Great inventors and leaders are not born. They are motivated and inspired to do great things by great teachers like you. Thank you for taking good care of our children."*

- Heather and Fred Dawson,  
parents of Professor Mark Dawson



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