21 Kirika Street,
Charlestown, 2290.
30 September, 1986.

Dear Mrs. Beard,

I am writing to you and your family, on behalf of my fellow former Newcastle Boys' High School students and myself, to express to you and your family our great sorrow at the news of the death of Harold Beard.

Harold was not only a great educator, but an uncommonly wise man. Unfortunately, although there were a great many of us whom Harold taught who were then clever, and a further significant number who were intelligent, there were few of us indeed at that age, with wisdom enough ourselves, to recognise that great attribute in another. With time and maturity, however, a great many of us have come to appreciate the debt that we owe Harold, as our educator, during that very formative period of our lives.

As the Obituary in last Monday's Newcastle Herald reminds us, Harold was "a gentle master of discipline who used persuasion rather than force. He had a keen interest in music and history and introduced weekly assemblies with a guest speaker. He fostered an interest in current affairs, debating and public speaking, and was a pioneer of sex education in schools. A staunch supporter of the Far West Children's Health Scheme, in Manly, which allowed children from the outback to visit the city for treatment, he was an early advocate of migrant and adult education."

I was personally gratified to have the opportunity to meet Harold again, after so many years, when he was kind enough to make the long trip down from Urunga to

attend the school reunions which we organised in 1977, and again in 1982. Our unanimous impression of him, on those occasions, was of a man small and fine in stature, but not weak, most articulate and sincere, and with an authority and presence that commanded respect. Our pleasure on those occasions, at meeting with one another and with our Headmaster again, after 20 and 25 years, was more than doubled by the obvious pleasure that Harold derived also. I shall long cherish the memory, on the last occasion, of Harold on the piano leading 65 of his "old boys" in spirited renditions of the School Song, "Goodbye (from The White Horse Inn)" and other favourites from school assembly days.

Harold stayed at my home overnight on the occasion of the last reunion in 1982, during which brief time my family and I developed a fond liking for him as a person, to complement my existing respect for him as our Headmaster. He spoke (and later wrote) with warmth of his family, his home and his garden at Urunga. I deeply regret now that I did not have the opportunity to call in and visit you both at your home, as I promised Harold I would. Although I respected his wish to "retire" from participation in school reunions in Newcastle, subsequent to the last event in 1982, I was hoping to see him early next year, so that I could communicate to our next reunion in November 1987, a report from our mentor. That reunion will now be the poorer for his passing. It will, however, be an opportunity for us all, in the fellowship of our common bond, to reflect on the great legacy he has left us.

Although there is nothing that one can do, at a time like this, to reduce the grief that another feels at the loss of a loved one, I am writing to let you know that, throughout Australia, and indeed abroad, there is a widespread community of men who knew Harold and appreciated his worth as a person, who now share your grief.

With deepest sympathy.

Yours sincerely,

Dick Sanders

2 Jean Close
Nelungaloo 2455
15 Oct 1986

Dear Dick,

I cannot tell you with what joy 'midst our sorrow at the loss of our dear husband and father we received your letter on behalf of your fellow former Newcastle Bays' High School students and yourself.

It is a fine tribute to Harold which he would have been very proud to have seen.

You have put into words a wonderful picture of what Harold meant to you as your headmaster and friend.

To us he was one of nature's own gentlemen. His life was one of loving and serving, reaching out and touching so many.

Thank you for your sympathetic thoughts towards myself and our family.

Yours sincerely,
Molly Beard.