

SALLY GRAY

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HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER 1968-1970

Through 1968 – 1970 Sally Gray was a teacher of English language, English Literature, History, Music and General Studies at Victorian State High Schools during a period of intense social, educational and political change. She was in the vanguard of new methods of teaching and new approaches to curriculum, in which the student was the centre of the learning process, content was to be relevant to students' lives, learning was to be enjoyable, and students were not to be sheltered from historical, political or social reality.



Her first appointment was to the rural community of Mirboo North in Gippsland, where she befriended the, also newly appointed, art teacher Ela Wajnryb, attended evening classes in life drawing and pottery at nearby Morwell Technical College, invited her sixth form literature students to fireside poetry readings in her rented house after school, and drove to Melbourne every weekend.

For the following two years she taught at St Albans High School in Western Melbourne, a school with students from a huge range of backgrounds and eighty-one different languages, in an outer suburb casually demeaned in the tabloid press. As a young teacher she was interested in students' rights and relaxing the role of the teacher. In her third year of teaching she was promoted to be the Head of the English Department at St Albans High School where she thrived among active unionist teachers, a young cohort of recent entrants to the profession, and senior staff who were interested in student creativity and personal growth. She was befriended by students and ex-students, who naturally saw young, savvy teachers as potential gateways to bigger lives and opportunities.





Sally's Fifth Form English class from St Albans High School at the Vietnam Moratorium Demonstration Melbourne 1969. Photo: Max Costa







• Sally photographed by her fifth form English student Max Costa for a photography project at St Albans High School, Melbourne



Sally with her home room group, St Albans High School, 1970

TEACHER









