



125

CELEBRATING 125 YEARS



1898 - 2023

PROUD HISTORY; PROGRESSIVE FUTURE

A short history of our school

Epworth was founded in 1898 by two pioneering women, Miss Emily Lowe and Miss Emma Mason. The school was named after the village of Epworth in Lincolnshire, the birthplace of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.

On 3 August, with a staff complement of five, Epworth opened its doors in central Pietermaritzburg to 45 Natal settler children (26 seniors and 19 kindergarten pupils). The senior classes were held in a house in Loop Street and the kindergarten was located in the Metropolitan Sunday School Hall in Chapel Street. The eleven boarders were housed at the Chapel Street Parsonage and the Mission House on Church Street.



Miss Emily Lowe



Miss Emma Mason



The main building on Prince Alfred Street

In 1901, in order to accommodate an influx of pupils from the northern provinces as a result of the Anglo-Boer war, a large house, overlooking Alexandra Park in Prince Alfred Street, was purchased, as well as adjacent land that extended through to Burger Street. A year later, a new three-story building, known as the Main Building, was opened with two sides of the grounds opening on to the park.

For the first 21 years Epworth operated as a private venture. In 1919 it was transferred to the Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa which appointed a management council. This arrangement continued until 1982

when it was taken over by an independent trust which assumed responsibility for the school's assets and liabilities, while ensuring it retained its Methodist character.

As war clouds loomed in 1936 and spurred on by Miss Church's (the then principal) desire for Epworth to become "one of the foremost schools in the land", a decision was taken to move the school to a more appropriate setting. Forty acres of land in Scottsville were bought from the Pietermaritzburg City Council and the new school was officially opened in 1941.



In 1948, the school's Jubilee year, the Administrator of Natal, the Honourable DG Shepstone, laid the foundation stone for a new building, aptly named Jubilee Block. It included hostel accommodation, biology and science rooms, a lecture theatre and a new library. Epworth was now considered to have the best site and buildings in Pietermaritzburg.

In 1959, a beautiful chapel, strategically and symbolically located at the heart of the campus, was a significant addition to the new school.

The foundation stone for a dedicated junior school was laid in 1965, and the school's 75th anniversary, in 1973 (fifty years ago), marked the opening of the Haley Hall and a nursery school to house its 50 pre-primary pupils and three teachers. Boys, who had been part of grades 1 to 3 since the fifties, were introduced into the rest of the primary school in 1994.

1979 was a noteworthy year in Epworth's history. It marked the admission of the school's first black pupils and brought to fruition Miss Kachelhoffer's (Principal from 1953-1965) long-held belief that Epworth's success would be gained through giving each girl, regardless of colour or creed, a chance.



Epworth Centenary, 1998



Epworth Jubilee, 1948

Today, as we look to the future, we remember the words of Nelson Mandela:

“The ways in which we achieve our goals are bound by context, changing with circumstances even while remaining steadfast in our commitment to our vision.”



Programme of 125th Celebratory Events

125th High School Celebration Chapel Service

Friday, 3 February | 08h00

Epworth Chapel

A chapel service, for the High School and invited guests, with the theme “One faith. One family”, to mark the beginning of our 125th festivities and to celebrate and give thanks for this significant milestone in our school’s history.

125th Preparatory School Celebration Chapel Service

Wednesday, 8 February | 08h00

Epworth Chapel

A chapel service, for the Prep School and invited guests, focusing on “One faith. One family”, aimed at celebrating Epworth and giving thanks for our rich heritage.

Night of Stars Dinner

Monday, 13 February | 18h00 for 18h30

Epworth Haley Hall

A spit braai with evening entertainment in celebration of Epworth’s outstanding sports legacy, featuring past pupil sports stars as well as other sports celebrities.



2023 Dusi Canoe Marathon

Thursday, 16 February to Saturday, 18 February

A three-day event on the annual Epworth sporting calendar, which, this year, will feature a 125th celebratory batch, comprising current pupils, past pupils and a staff/management team.

2023 Independent Schools' Tennis Festival

Thursday, 16 February to Sunday, 19 February

Epworth Campus

An annual tennis festival, featuring independent schools' teams from around the country, which will be hosted by Epworth in celebration of its 125th year.

Prep School Drakensberg Adventure

Friday, 31 March to Sunday, 2 April

Injisuthi, Central Drakensberg

A moderate to strenuous, three-day guided hike in the central Drakensberg for Grades 6 and 7 pupils (who meet the required fitness levels), accompanied by their parents or guardians, which will be led by Epworth staff and Trailblazer Adventures.

Celebration of 125th Commemorative Book

Friday, 5 May | 10h00

Epworth Performing Arts Centre

A tea to highlight the 125th commemorative book, *Epworth: Our Joyful Light since 1898*, with an opportunity to interact with the past pupil author, publishers and other key Epworthians involved in its writing and production.



Joyful Twilight in the Chapel Garden

Friday, 5 May | 16:30

Chapel Garden

A walk-through Epworth's rejuvenated chapel garden, which was remodelled by a group of expert Epworthian gardeners, for Epworthians and guests attending the gala dinner.

Epworthian Gala Dinner

Friday, 5 May | 18h00

Epworth Haley Hall

A gala dinner for Epworthians (past pupils) and friends of Epworth, with special focus on the 125th commemorative book, *Epworth: Our Joyful Light since 1898*.

Epworthian Day

Saturday, 6 May | 08h30

Epworth campus

A day of joyful campus festivities, with a 125th focus, providing an opportunity for Epworthians to revisit their alma mater, reunite with one another and relive their school memories.

Independent Schools' Sports Festival (ISSF)

Friday, 9 June to Saturday, 10 June

Epworth campus

A sports festival, founded in 1998 by Epworth, for independent high schools that focuses on hockey, netball, squash and tennis.



High School Wild Coast Adventure

Sunday, 25 June to Tuesday, 27 June

The Wild Coast

A hike, totalling 52 km, which includes kayaking and kloofing, on the Wild Coast for current pupils and parents/guardians, staff members and Epworthians.

Epworth's 125th Birthday

Thursday, 3 August

Epworth campus

A 125th birthday celebration, comprising different whole school activities, which coincides with the opening of the school on this day in 1898.

125th Celebration Dinner

Saturday, 9 September | 18h00 for 18h30

Epworth Multi-Purpose Centre 2

A formal, three-course dinner hosted by the High and Prep School Parents' Associations.

Christmas Community Concert (TBC)

Friday, 24 November in the evening

Epworth Chapel

This event's details will be disseminated closer to the time.



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For further information, please contact

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