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ATH  
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[REDACTED]

Dr. I. Paterson  
Headmaster  
Knox Grammar School  
WAHROONGA NSW 2076

Dear Dr. Paterson

Six years seem to have passed extremely fast. I recall the combined parent/student assembly at the commencement of 1983 and many of your comments and challenges to the new Knox community members on that occasion.

My one personal regret is that due to distance from Sydney, and my occupations, I was prevented from taking an active parent-support role.

ATG [REDACTED]'s extremely good HSC result (450 for exams and 425-437 for University entrances) certainly commends the principle reason for the choice of Knox - academic achievement! I am pleased that I rejected your advice in July last year (after the Cadet incident) to pull

ATG [REDACTED] out of the system - the consequences would have been very costly and wasteful.

I appreciate your perseverance and the obvious commitment and dedication of Mr Dinnell and his staff.

ATG [REDACTED] plans to commence the new Commerce Degree course in Marketing and Hospitality Management at the University of NSW in 1989. Thankfully I know he will be able to retain close friendships with many of his Knox colleagues throughout Sydney and NSW in the future.

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It is unfortunate that you and the Ewan House Master, had to contact me on various occasions in ATG's last years with regard to his (non-scholastic) activities which contravened the general Knox standards. I appreciate that the exuberance of youth and the rapidly changing mores of society impose tremendous pressures on institutions such as Knox. However, I must say that the rigidity of "the system", the lack of consistency by non-teaching staff, the absence of praise and adequate pastoral care, and no meaningful contact with female teachers or supervisors are my honest criticisms. Of course these issues are compounded in the boarding environment.

As someone with a strong practicing Christian conviction I must also express my concern that ATG has walked away from our faith - hopefully only for the time being - because he failed to perceive sufficient "Christ-like examples" in those charged with this responsibility. The Chaplain's actions in questioning my integrity on the one occasion I asked ATG to be excused from chapel, and in openly discussing (critically) ATG's cadet incident with another-year Divinity class, were insulting and un-necessary.

There is an in-built inconsistency to expect 17 and 18 year old "young men" to accept full responsibility for many of their actions and yet be treated as "kids" by House Masters and Disciplinarians. The use of sarcastic and back-stabbing comments, violence, and a lack of ability for reasoned argument naturally produce rebellion and aggression in boarders away from moderating home influences. It is also a concern that supervisors do not always have impeccable domestic and family arrangements. This is an area where I am of the opinion that leading by example is absolutely essential to guarantee reciprocal respect from impressionable teenagers.

I am sure that ATG's character development and maturity have been greatly influenced for good by his Knox years - and the benefit of hindsight will also make good the negative experiences and examples.

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I have had the opportunity in recent months to meet with other boarder-parents. It has been interesting to discover common ground and problems in our sons. I would recommend that in determining school policy (particularly standards, rules and expectations for boarders) a much more concerted effort be made by the Council and/or Administration to involve parents. It is indicative that in six years I was not invited to make any positive input other than financial contribution or "last resort" problem solving. I was not asked on any occasion to express views on staff, curriculum, or the boarding house environment. I must accept a degree of guilt by silence.

I will be happy to discuss any of the above issues in more detail if required. Please feel free to call on my help in any political arena that can benefit Knox.

ATG [redacted] will obviously maintain links with the Knox communitys and when he makes decisions for his own children's education no doubt the school will be both co-educational and considerably changed.

Again let me reiterate my particular thanks for a fine educational result.

Yours sincerely

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9/2/86