



Resignation and successor

Kia ora,

Many of you will know that I have been muttering about resigning for quite some time. What has caused this procrastination has largely been wanting to make sure that the Institute will continue to thrive and that whoever replaced me would bring fresh ideas and energy into the role. I believe that person has been found so I am really pleased to announce that I will be retiring from the beginning of this term and that Zoë Meager will be the new Director.

Zoë will provide this zest and a new vision to the Institute and she is eminently well qualified for the task. She brings broad experience to the role of Director, having worked as a policy analyst, researcher, teacher, technical communicator, artists' residency manager, as well as in marketing and libraries. She has Master's degrees in Sociology and Creative Writing, and writes short fiction and prose poems, with work published and commended widely.

There will be changes as well to our teaching staff. Frankie has requested that she take a year's leave in order to work on a new book coming out later this year from CUP and with Zoë fully engaged as Director, we will have two new tutors.

Faith Oxenbridge has tutored and mentored for us in the past and we are really delighted that she has agreed to work for us again. Faith has been teaching creative writing on and off for a very long time. She has a Master of Creative Writing from Canterbury University, and her short fiction has been published in Best NZ Fiction, The NZ Listener, The Six Pack 2, the Christchurch Press and the Australian Book Review. She was runner-up in the BNZ Katherine Mansfield Competition in 2012, a finalist in the Victoria University Overland Competition in 2013 and won the (NZ) Sunday Star Times Competition in 2013. Her novel was long listed for the Michael Gifkins' prize in 2019. Faith was also a theatre critic for the NZ Listener for twelve years.

Our second tutor will be Chloe Lane. We are very fortunate that Chloe has agreed to tutor for us as she comes with excellent credentials not just as a tutor but as a writer as well. She is a 2021 Grimshaw Sargeson Fellow and earned her MFA in Fiction from the University of Florida in 2017. She also has a MA from the International Institute of Modern Letters, Victoria University Wellington, and a BFA from Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland. Her debut novel *The Swimmers* was published by Victoria University Press in 2020 and has just been long-listed in this year's Ockham New Zealand Book Awards. She has recently published essays in *The Spinoff*, *Pantograph Punch*, *Newsroom*, *Subtropics* (USA), and *Contemporary HUM*. She currently lives in Ōtautahi Christchurch with her husband and young son.

I was surprised and honoured to be asked in 2007 by Bernadette Hall, then Writer in Residence at Hagley and Mike Fowler, then Head of English, to help set up and run the Hagley Writers' Institute. I have been aided over the years by the extraordinary work of the tutors who have given students the gift of their wisdom and experience – Bernadette Hall, Fiona Farrell, Frankie McMillan, Christina Stachurski, Kerrin P Sharpe and Faith Oxenbridge. They have been very easy to work with and I am so grateful for the friendship and loyalty I have enjoyed over the years. I also want to acknowledge the great work of the many mentors who have supported and encouraged the students over the years. I have also been encouraged and well supported by the Hagley staff, especially Mike Fowler and Marie Stribling, who have allowed me a great deal of freedom in running the Institute, have had faith in me and have quietly and expertly guided me when I have needed their help. Thank you to all the other staff who I have come to know over the years and who have always been happy to assist. I have felt very much part of the Hagley family and will continue to be hugely invested in the continued success and ongoing expansion of the College.

And lastly, what can I say about all the students who have passed through the Institute over the last 13 years? I have benefitted so much from knowing you and been enriched and enlightened by your writing. I have rejoiced in your successes but, just as important to me, has been the camaraderie that you have developed in the classes and, in many cases, continued on outside of the Institute. I enjoy meeting up with you at festival and literary events, hearing from you and about you and I hope that the spark that brought you to the Institute has been fostered and sustained by your time with us.

However before this valedictory message gets too intense, I need to let you know that I am staying on this year as a mentor and taking over from Bernadette Hall who has been, like me, suggesting she should retire, as Patron. Bernadette has been an integral part of the Institute as a founder, tutor, and mentor and I want to thank her for her enthusiastic support and unstinting involvement which I am sure will continue. As I am easing out gradually, I look forward to getting to know our 2021 students before I finally leave.

It has been an enormous privilege and pleasure to be the Director over all these years and I know with Zoë in control, the Writers' Institute will continue to flourish.

My best wishes and thanks to all of you.

Ngā mihi,

Morrin

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