



Alumnae Spotlight



Each month we shine the spotlight on one of our Alumnae.

Our Alumnae this month is Monique McPheeter. Monique is Smart, Fun, Determined, Focused, Entrepreneurial, Family oriented and easy going, to whom age is no barrier.

Here's what Monique had to say

*Monique
McPheeter*

Class of 1987

WHAT MEMORIES OF YOUR CHILDHOOD YEARS REMAIN WITH YOU TODAY?

Memories of my childhood that still remains with me today are my Grandparents. My Grandparents, both passed are Lanieta and Uraia Mateyawa from the Organic Island of Cicia, koro Natokalau, mataqali Lomanikoro. My Grandfather was a hardworking, man of his word, humble man who served in the 2nd World War. He was the only wage earner of 10 children and never complained. He always showed a happy persona. He enjoyed his suki (Fijian tobacco) and kava. Many of the sessions I would join him for company.

He would make us lovo every Sunday with food from his teitei (plantation) and sometimes we would get a special treat with lovo chicken added to the menu. My Grandmother was the "home manager" who made everything work. She was stern and talented. She was a good cook who managed to make yummy meals for the family out of a very small budget. She was a very talented mat weaver, and her skills were very impressive. She was a strong pillar to her siblings, her in-laws and her children and grandchildren.

Can you share a significant experience during your SJSS high school years and, on reflection, why was this impactful?

A significant experience during SJSS high school years would have to be getting to know the girls and the interaction that I experienced with different personalities and cultures. I am very privileged to have met girls from all walks of life at SJSS.

This has made my life richer. I am still in touch with many of my classmates and hold them dear to my heart. Some have become like family.

This has been impactful because, those relationships that were made 30 years ago are still intact today. How many of us can say that we have contact with friends from high school, especially when we live out of Fiji, and we still maintain our friendships.

WHAT INFLUENCED YOUR CAREER PATHWAY AND HOW DID YOU GET TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY?

I remember back at SJSS, my accounting teacher, Mrs Sharma, a lovely lady. I enjoyed learning and it turned out that I would become an Accountant. This was my favourite subject, and I always did well, usually at the top of the class in Accounting. Where I am today, was a direct result of this, working in the area and having my own small business and being interested in all things Accounting.

WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE OTHERS WHO ASPIRE TO BE PART OF A SIMILAR INDUSTRY?

We are so fortunate today that there are many pathways to achieve your goals. If you don't follow the path straight out of high school, you can work and get some experience and go back to follow your dreams. Never count yourself out. Keep working at it. Sometimes, thinking about the whole process can be daunting. Just keep chipping away in small steps to achieve the big goal.



On reflection, which school subject/project became the backbone of your career pathway?

Accounting field became the backbone of my career pathway. I currently work in the field. I also have a small business and my Accounting / Finance skills have become very handy.

I also serve on a few Not for Profit Organisations such as Fiji Diaspora Women's Alliance, Cicia Development Committee (Aust) and Woman of Valour Liverpool City Church as Treasurer.

I recently completed my Diploma in Financial Counselling this year, and this is another pathway for me to explore. Recently, I have been holding live 'Money Talks with Monique' sessions on the FDWA Facebook page, sharing information and advocacy work in the financial hardship space.

WHAT WORLDLY GUIDANCE CAN YOU SHARE WITH THE CURRENT STUDENTS OF SJSS?

Worldly guidance to the current students of SJSS would be to enjoy your years at school. Make connections and keep good relationships. If you make a mistake, get up, dust yourself off and try again. It is never the end of the world.

If you are experiencing or going through a tough situation, get help, talk to a trusted person, get an advocate to fight on your behalf. Never settle for less. You don't have to fit into the norm. Make your own path. Never feel that you are not good enough. We are all worth something.

Be a good friend. If your bestie is experiencing a hard time, offer support. We never know where we will end up in life. Keep a positive outlook on life.

As part of your story, are there any SJSS Alumnae you would like to reach out to and reconnect?



To my SJSS Alumnae sisters that would like to get in contact, always good to hear from you. We currently meet up with the Class of 87' Sydney girls, so if anyone out there want to join in, you would be most welcome. When I'm in Fiji, I also like to catch up with the Fiji girls for coffee or lunch.