

HERSTORY

NEWSLETTER

Feminism Noun \ fem-i-nism

A BELIEF IN THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC EQUALITY OF THE SEXES

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| Helen Apperley |



Earlier this month, our Herstory team interviewed Helen Apperley, who has been an iconic member of the Sir John Talbot's team for almost 30 years. In her most recent and final role here as Assistant Headteacher, she has dedicated herself to raising the standards of behaviour within Sir John Talbot's and has worked tirelessly to ensure the school is a hub of community activity. We interviewed Mrs Apperley in her final couple of weeks of being a full-time staff member at Sir John Talbot's, as she looked back on her experiences with the school, and the real difference that she has made to the education of hundreds of young people across her time as an educator.

Beginning her time here as a supply teacher back in 1991, she worked with students when the school was still split between the upper and lower school across two separate sites. Now, 30 years on, she still works with pride for the students of Sir John Talbot's, albeit in a slightly different role with a very different Sir John Talbot's. Despite no longer having to make car journeys through town to get to her next lesson, Mrs Apperley is no less dedicated to her role, recently than she ever has been, however she is more likely to be seen sprinting between lessons nowadays to wherever she is needed.

'Never say no, nothing is ever wasted'

When asked about where her drive and commitment to her role comes from, Mrs Apperley expressed immense gratitude towards the way she was raised, especially by her father, to go ahead and get on with things and figure everything out for herself. Her upbringing as the eldest sibling on a working farm shaped her independence and resilience and allowed her to not feel any limitations, even as a young woman growing up in a changing society. Taking up every opportunity to learn any practical skill she could is what Mrs Apperley credits to allowing her to develop into such a well-rounded individual who is not afraid to try new things.

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Her role raising behavioural standards within Sir John Talbot's expands far broader than simply placing misbehaving children into isolation and dashing after runaways; she views her role as integral in "preparing young people for the demands of the workplace" and allowing the students at Sir John Talbot's to develop into well rounded individuals within the Whitchurch community. Secondary school experiences are renowned for shaping young people and Sir John Talbot's values, alongside Mrs Apperley's own personal values of politeness and respect, are most certainly instilled within students thanks to the hard work and dedication put in both by Mrs Apperley and the team surrounding her. These core values have shaped Mrs Apperley and her work in educating young people, she believes that they are accessible to everyone and set you up for success within all aspects of life due to teaching you how to interact and treat others.

Excellence is one of the key values that is taught by the school however Mrs Apperley believes that excellence is not simply shown by grades or assessments, excellence can be demonstrated in a range of ways. Talking about the excellence she instilled in her own children, Mrs Apperley spoke about having a strong work ethic and perseverance even when it gets tough. "There is value to everything that you do, even if you don't enjoy it, you are developing skills for the future" — resilience and persistence are some of the most universal ways to demonstrate excellence and strength in all areas of life.

Mrs Apperley is most certainly viewed by students as an incredibly strong leader and a driving force of the Sir John Talbot's team, however, when asked about what skills she values within herself for this role, she admitted she views herself as a teammate and no more and that "the work of a driven and well-directed team can achieve far greater things than one singular person reaching out on their own". She takes on many different roles within her life as a parent, educator and community member and utilises this variety of roles to inform her decisions within her work and what she believes as right. One of her qualities she felt was integral to her role was her tenacity and ability to stick with what she believes is right and this has contributed to her success in many of the projects she has undertaken within the school in order to contribute to the community both socially and economically.

Mrs Apperley's dedication to the school does not end once she exits the gates, she uses her personal time to research and find new, exciting opportunities for the school and Sir John Talbot's permeates her activities. She holds the school closely to her heart and takes her role very seriously, ensuring she always provides the best opportunities for the school and the community. She believes it is important for the school to become a strong hub for the wider community.

Despite her oncoming retirement, Mrs Apperley has no fears of becoming bored, already planning her next walking adventures and time with friends to catch up, alongside taking up a new hobby of golf to keep her schedule busy and jam-packed, we would expect nothing less from Mrs Apperley, although she might not be running down a corridor, she will be running along the golf course.

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| Jacinda Ardern |



The youngest ever female Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, has managed to unite and inspire whilst delivering a world-leading response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Acting swiftly whilst effectively communicating with the people, Jacinda's leadership puts kindness at the top of the agenda. Therefore, it is not surprising that a poll found that she was the most popular leader of New Zealand in over a hundred years. Optimistic, approachable and empathetic, Jacinda perfectly exemplifies the way in which leaders can use their role to connect with people.

Having joined the New Zealand Labour Party because she wanted to reduce child poverty when she was just seventeen,

Jacinda always dreamed of a career in politics. Her early beliefs have remained strong throughout her career, announcing the goal of cutting child poverty in New Zealand in half by the year 2028. Jacinda's response is always guided by empathy, evident through her immediate action to ban assault rifles following the Christchurch terror attacks, whilst also providing financial and emotional support for the families affected. Likewise, the launch of New Zealand's first wellbeing budget placed the health and wellbeing of the people at the heart of government work, and further showcases her compassionate and considerate nature.

'I refuse to believe that you cannot be both compassionate and strong'

Jacinda Ardern has transformed public assumptions about women in leadership and is most certainly accustomed to breaking glass ceilings, proving her ability to lead in times of chaos and tragedy over her four years in office. Becoming the second world leader to ever give birth whilst in office and introducing her daughter Neve to the world at a United Nations conference, Jacinda has shown women across the world that they should not let societal expectations dictate what they can or cannot do. Hardworking and enthusiastic, Jacinda Ardern acts as a global role model.

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As well as proving herself as a powerful force for change, Jacinda has also developed a reputation for her approachability. What shines through the most when you watch any interview with her is her kind-hearted and relatable nature. From declaring the Tooth Fairy and the Easter Bunny “essential workers” to reassure the children of New Zealand during the COVID-19 pandemic to continuing a TV interview during a 5.8 magnitude earthquake without batting an eye; it is evident through everything she does that Jacinda truly enjoys and is passionate about helping the people of New Zealand. It is this humanity that makes her a truly brilliant leader. Whilst her political success and innovative policies are widely commended - it is her compassion that secures her place as one of the greatest world leaders of the 21st century.

Ultimately, Jacinda Ardern is not just a politician, she is a hero, and has proved on a global stage that she is capable of great things. Many world leaders can look to her as a perfect example of how to guide a country through crisis with courage and compassion.

Where can I learn more?

★ *Jacinda Ardern: A New Kind of Leader* by Michelle Duff

| Katherine Johnson |

Who was Katherine Johnson?



Katherine Johnson was an extraordinary mathematician whose work at NASA, calculating orbital mechanics and trajectories, were fundamental to the success and legacy of the first and subsequent US crewed spaceflights. She was one of the first African American women to work at NASA as a scientist, and championed work in aeronautics for her 33-year career with the association winning the Silver Snoopy Award for outstanding mission success and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Johnson always had a hunger for knowledge and excelled in all aspects of her studies from a very young age - attending high school at just ten-years-old and then entering university at fifteen. The focal point of her expertise,

however, lay in mathematics which she confided in throughout her life, highlighting that what she loved most about studying maths was the “definite right or wrong” to the questions she encountered.

In 1953, when Johnson was in her mid-thirties, she joined NASA (then known as NACA), acting as a human-computer, checking flight mechanics and then moved to checking trajectories and navigation plans in 1958. Johnson was critical to the success of NASA’s first, and most revolutionary missions that accelerated the developments of the Space Race; she calculated the trajectory and launch window of Alan Shepard’s 1961 space flight which led to him being the first American in space. Not only that, but Johnson was integral to the success of John Glenn’s 1963 orbit around the Earth as he refused to fly unless Johnson herself verified the calculations made by a computer.

‘We needed to be assertive as women in those days – assertive and aggressive’

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Most remarkably, Johnson's expertise in mathematics and geometry were harnessed during the 1969 Moon Landing where she assisted in calculating the trajectory and flight pattern. Even the 1970 Apollo 13 Moon mission, which was aborted after the oxygen tank began to fail two-days into the planned six-day flight, Johnson acted again as saving grace when her team's backup procedures and charts allowed a safe flight back for the crew to return to Earth, she recalls, "Everybody was concerned about them getting there. We were concerned about them getting back."

From then on, Johnson worked on satellites, navigation systems and even planned a mission to Mars. In later life she was a strong advocate for women and young people in STEM, encouraging others to take on technical and scientific careers.

Why is she important?

Johnson dominated her field at a time when racial segregation was implemented in all aspects of American society, and misogyny perpetuated each level of the career ladder. She was a revolutionary force that now acts as a brilliant success story and significant role model to young, aspirational scientists and mathematicians throughout the world.

Where can I learn more?

- ★ Hidden Figures (2016) film
- ★ New Scientist - Katherine Johnson <<https://www.newscientist.com/people/katherine-johnson/>>

Thank you for taking the time to read our latest issue.

If you have any suggestions for future articles, please do not hesitate to contact Miss Brinkworth: Brinkworth.e@sjt.mmat.org.uk