



MY FORTUNATE LIFE AS A TEACHER AND NATURALIST IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Eric McCrum OAM

Eric McCrum, PMS student 1950-51 and School Prefect 1951, has accepted Council's invitation to deliver the 2023 Annual Oration to PMS senior students on 27 November 2023.

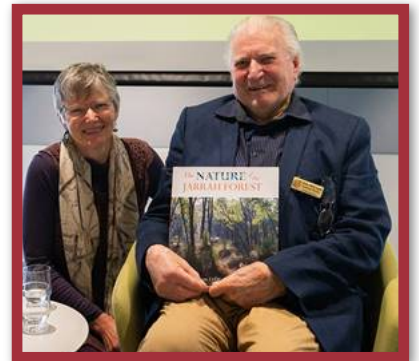
Distinguished Modernian Eric McCrum OAM grew up in Bassendean, where he spent much of his childhood exploring the wildlife around the Swan River. Eric was educated at Bassendean Primary School, Midland High School, Perth Modern School, and Claremont Teachers College.

Eric's passion for nature has led him to work as a teacher, headmaster, and nature educator, passing on his knowledge of nature to many students over the years. Indeed, for over seventy years. He has devoted himself to understanding the natural world, and spreading his enthusiasm and knowledge to children and adults alike. For ten years Eric taught at the Perth Zoo Education Centre, and then for fourteen years at the Gould League Wildlife Centre at Herdsman Lake, inspiring over seven thousand visiting children a year.

Eric McCrum, naturalist, teacher and keen photographer, is known to many as 'The Birdman' on ABC radio, and is capable of imitating the call of almost any bird found in the Australian bush. He is also knowledgeable about the Noongar history of West Australian land, as well as Aboriginal language, such as relating to the place names of WA towns.

Eric received the Order of Australia Medal OAM and the also the Michael Chin Humanitarian Award for his services in environmental education, conservation, and natural history.

Since retirement, Eric continues to give talks and works to foster the care for, and protection of, the natural world through education. He does numerous talks to a variety of groups and presents regularly on a radio. He has an incredible memory and knowledge of all things nature. He has also authored a book called "The Nature of the Jarrah Forest" with his daughter, Janine McCrum (see photo below), launched in August 2023.



Eric McCrum, aged just 19, in his first year of teaching in 1954, with all the students at the Reid school (Nullarbor, WA)