



# The Bay Academy

*Growing brave young adults to be skilled, tenacious, independent thinkers making a significant and sensitive contribution to society.*

11<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Dear Parents,

At the end of 2023, I anticipated 2024 as being the year where “dragons be here”. I was intimating that 2024 would be a year of unknown challenges. I echoed this in a School Assembly about how the world is more unpredictable.



We have now reached the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024 and a few “dragons” have emerged. Internationally, to name a few: Presidential elections are becoming more tense and moving away from the perceived norm. The UK and EU are dealing with increased climate change and refugees. The Middle East conflict has intensified and the Cold War tension has been reignited. Southeast Asia has seen rising anxiety with North Korea threatening regional stability.

Closer to home, we have had political and economic scandals, flooding, devastating fires, rising unemployment and the deteriorating status rating of our economy.

I do not think I am alone in feeling the torque of modern life and how difficult it is to be buoyant about where we live and the times in which we live.

However, I happen to watch a series of video clips by Michael Charton. He is a passionate South African. His craft is story-

telling and he invites his audience to walk in the shoes of his real-life characters. His powerful stories allow us to relate. One remembers his stories by how they make you feel. I urge you to listen to his stories.

I took stock after watching his videos and treasured, that despite the angst we share at the moment, we as South Africans have much of which to be proud. Our history as a country has depth.

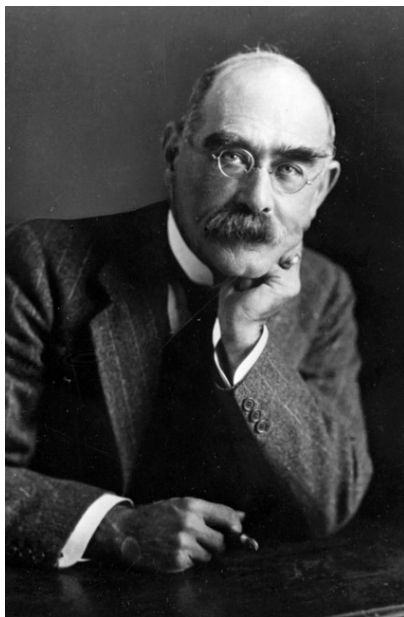
I was particularly moved by the story about “Sailor” Malan, a famous South African fighter pilot from the Battle of Britain. Being a bit of a military history aficionado, I know of his exploits. What I did not know, and which Michael Charton so beautifully captures, is his role in protesting against apartheid.



I watched Michael Charton's short piece on the history of the national anthem, Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrica. How it had been introduced during the early rugby tests shortly after the fall of apartheid. How those of us who were there struggled with the new words, but felt that something special was going on. A country, as a whole, was being reinvented.



Another story describes the link between Rudyard Kipling's "If" poem and South Africa.



How this poem, at the time, a simple collection of paternal thoughts for his then 13-year-old son, John, became a timeless lesson for life.

I always found it so outstanding and yet did not know that as tennis players enter centre court of Wimbledon, they walk beneath a powerful and moving extract from the poem, "*If you can meet triumph and disaster and treat those two imposters the same.*" What gravitas in these magnificent value-laden words.

These and other stories, some forgotten, are well-researched and narrated by Michael Charton and bring perspective and pride to living in our troubled but beautiful country.

Reflecting back on the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, I have been witness to many Bay Academy stories. They are simple ones, nothing to write home about type stories. However, when you perceive them regularly, then you understand why we have such pride in our school. The genuine care a teacher exhibits for their charges. The child who is sensitive to the needs of others and the parent who acknowledges the extra mile that the school has gone for their child. The smile and warm greeting one hears as you walk between classes. These, and many other small "pay it forward" moments, perhaps singularly do not amount to much, but collectively make our school so special.

If, like me, you are finding that the "dragons" are emerging, then remind yourself of what has been achieved, both in South Africa and at The Bay Academy.

Kind regards

John Alexander

Principal