

SHELFORD GIRLS' GRAMMAR

Bree Knoester travelled by bus for 90 minutes each way from Vermont South to her high school in Caulfield, but the effort was worth it. Knoester, 34, won a Shelford Girls' Grammar 50 per cent tuition scholarship that helped her achieve the marks she needed to study law.

Her mother, Karin, raised Knoester and her sister, Abby, alone. She wanted them to have a private education so Knoester started at Shelford in year 7, then sat a scholarship exam in year 8. She prepared for months and learned how to structure essays, "a skill and format I still use today when drafting letters of advice".

Now a partner at Holding Redlich and mother to Amalia, 16 months, Knoester repaid her mother and the school by becoming Dux of Shelford in 1997, achieving a perfect 50 in English. Mother and daughter have also served on the Shelford Board.

"I absolutely adored the teachers at Shelford and believe that the quality of the teachers and the small class sizes helped me achieve a year 12 result that meant I was able to enter the arts/law degree at Monash University," Knoester says. "I was very fond of my French, history, English and English literature teachers."

Knoester always wanted to be a lawyer and, inspired by her mother, who worked in the non-profit sector, she helps injured plaintiffs obtain compensation due to negligence. Without the scholarship she may not have had the opportunity. "I may not have been exposed to the type of learning that best fitted with me and that let me achieve great results," she says.

Knoester says families should consider whether a school is the best fit for their child before applying for a scholarship. Students should also learn persuasive writing skills, which can be crucial



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"My sister was also awarded a scholarship to Shelford based on her excellence as an 'all-rounder' - her scholarship was awarded via an interview process," she says. "Your child may not be a strict academic but may have other qualities that a school would like ... so inquire about alternative scholarship applications." \

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