



THE
FLAVIA GOBBO OAM
BURSARY



1948 APS Head of the River

www.rowinghistory-aus.info

THE FLAVIA GOBBO OAM BURSARY

“ James and I are proud to support the development of rowers in the Pathway program.

Both as a RA Board member and on a personal level, having had a number of elite rowers in the family, I understand the challenges faced by rowers coping with the demands of training, studying and working while on their journey to international representation.

If we are able to support some athletes to make this time a little easier and perhaps stay in the program then we will have achieved our objective”

FLAVIA GOBBO OAM



“ Flavia has a genuine love for rowing both from the competitive side and the growth of the sport.



1984 Victoria Cup winners with Flavia second from the right

FLAVIA GOBBO OAM

Flavia took up rowing whilst at Newman College, Melbourne University and was soon winning races at College, University, State and National levels. Her Victoria Cup win at the 1984 Interstate Championships was evidence of this rise.



Like her father (Sir James Gobbo) before her, Flavia was awarded a rowing blue after her success at the Intervarsity Championships - this was perhaps the first time a father and daughter had obtained blues in the same sport at Melbourne University.

The quick rise in the sport reflected her focus, determination and love of the sport - a team player who encourages other rowers to compete and enjoy the sport on and off the water.

She returned to rowing post children to successfully compete in masters rowing first for University of Queensland, and then Melbourne University when she returned to Victoria. She continues to rally others around her in her successful masters rowing career.

Her daughters Kate and Francesca and son Alex followed in her footsteps in rowing. Francesca won the Qld Schoolgirl Single scull and successfully competed in the Interstate regatta in the Qld Youth Eight and the Queen's Cup. She later earned a spot in the 2011 Australian Under 23 women's four. Kate represented Qld in the lightweight quad, and Alex raced in the Head of the River and afterwards in Qld youth squad and is now successfully competing in surf boat competitions.

Her key roles in the organisational aspects of rowing at a club, state and national level became a major part of her contribution to the sport. Flavia became a Board member of Rowing Australia and she served with distinction being Deputy Chair and Chair of the High Performance Committee. She was a regular attendee of key Australian and

International regattas, often being our national representative.

Rowing Australia went through much transformational change under her leadership. These matters included the controversial but necessary centralisation of our high performance program into the new National Training Centres.

The building of the women's training centre at Penrith was another critical but complex project involving the Commonwealth government, the NSW government, Rowing NSW, NSWIS, the local Council, sponsors to name just a few of the key parties involved. Then there was the design and build.

The establishment of the Pathways program, which is funded and managed centrally by Rowing Australia, was also a controversial and complex restructure requiring the co-operation of all the State Sporting Institutes and performance clubs to create a true national program.

Then of course is the ongoing work of the appointment and management of competent key executives and successful coaches of Rowing Australia, so critical to the success of these transformational projects.

Flavia has a genuine love for rowing both from the competitive side and the growth of the sport. Her personality allows her to nurture and excel in the sport she loves, and it shows now in her golf. When she takes on a challenge, she takes it on with both hands - tenacious, committed and focused.

CREDIT: ROWING HISTORY WEBSITE, ANDREW GUERIN
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The four Australians in the 1954 Oxford crew



SIR JAMES A GOBBO AC CVO QC

Sir James Augustine Gobbo, AC, CVO, QC was a distinguished Australian in many fields, including rowing.



Born in Melbourne during the Depression to Italian parents Antonio and Regina, James Gobbo was a short term resident of Melbourne - his family returned to Italy in 1935. By the age of seven, the family came back to Melbourne, at which time he spoke no English. Despite this initial language impediment, and with parental encouragement, Sir James excelled academically. His catholic education included St Mary's Primary School, West Melbourne, later St Joseph's CBC, North Melbourne and then in 1944 Xavier College.

It was at Xavier that his interest in rowing began. He was a member of the Xavier College crew that won the 1948 Associated Public Schools Head of the River - it would take until 1999 before Xavier College again won this event.

After leaving Xavier College, he studied law at the University of Melbourne whilst living at Newman College. It was with Melbourne University that he competed successfully twice in the Australian University Championships in the men's eight, racing for the Oxford and Cambridge Cup. His 1952 crew included Roderick Carnegie, later Sir Roderick Carnegie, 1957 Oxford University Boat Club President and leader in the mining industry, and also John Button, later Senator John Button and Minister in the Hawke government.

During his time at Melbourne University, he was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship to study at Magdalen College, Oxford University. He gained a Master of Arts degree.

Again he took this opportunity to pursue his passion for rowing, racing in The Boat Race for Oxford University Boat Club in 1954 and 1955, winning in 1954, the centenary Boat Race. The respect with which he was held, led him to be elected President of the Oxford University Boat Club in 1955. His crew contained Roderick Carnegie from his 1952 Melbourne University crew.

Despite a highly successful career as a barrister in Melbourne, Sir James found time to assist his club by being a Vice-President on two occasions in 1959-60 and 1963-64 and President in 1960-61.

Members of his family have also made great contributions to the sport as rowers, umpires and administrators. In particular, his daughter Flavia was also awarded a blue for rowing by Melbourne University and is currently deputy Chair of Rowing Australia.

Outside rowing, Sir James became a noted Queen's Counsel, then served on the bench of the Supreme Court of Victoria for 16 years (1978-1994), then the served as the 25th Governor of Victoria from 1997 - the first Governor to come from a non-English speaking background. His charitable work included many multicultural causes.

He was a distinguished, humble and charming man. He even had time to assist the author with rowing history, allowing me to copy some of his personal rowing pictures.

CREDIT: ROWING HISTORY WEBSITE, ANDREW GUERIN
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“ The purpose of the Flavia Gobbo OAM Bursary is to contribute to the next generation of Australian rowers.

Flavia Gobbo presenting the Victoria Cup at the 2022 Australian Rowing Championships

THE FLAVIA GOBBO OAM BURSARY

The Flavia Gobbo OAM Bursary was established in 2023 with a generous donation from the former Rowing Australia Deputy Chair and High Performance Commission Chair, Flavia Gobbo OAM and her husband, James MacKenzie.

With a home Olympic Games in Brisbane 2032, the purpose of the Flavia Gobbo OAM Bursary is to support current and future national team rowers selected to compete in the underage Australian Rowing Teams, in turn helping them to achieve selection to Senior World Championships and Olympic Games teams and contribute to the next generation of Australian Rowers.

Each year,
two recipients
(one male and
one female athlete)
will receive a grant of \$5,000.





SELECTION CRITERIA



To be eligible to apply the applicant must:

- be selected onto a Rowing Australia Underage Team which includes but is not limited to:
 - the Under 19 World Championships Team,
 - the Under 21 Trans-Tasman Team or
 - the Under 23 World Championships Team
- be an Australian citizen

There will be a clear focus on identifying prospective recipients who demonstrate a dedication to continue their successful journey in rowing and may be from rural or regional backgrounds.

APPLICATIONS



Online applications will open post Selection Trials.

All applications will be initially assessed by the Rowing Australia High Performance Director, Head of Pathways and CEO who will determine a short list.

The Bursary Manager will make the final decision within one month of the application closing date.

APPLY NOW



ROWING AUSTRALIA

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