



“T.B. - six months to live; no hope” . The doctor had been sympathetic but could offer no comfort. There would be no dying yet he thought, not if he could help it. He would show those doctors. He immediately embarked on a course of exercises to which he religiously adhered. Six months came and went, and far from being at death's door, William Haines was the picture of health. Exercises like running, walking, swimming and gymnastics, wholesome food, fresh air was the medicine he prescribed for himself and never was a cure more amazing and complete.

A born humanitarian, sensitive to the ills of his society, he noticed the wasteful indolence of the poorer youth of the city. In 1907 William Goodman Haines a firm believer in the character-building qualities of sport and exercise and started the Gordons Institute (named after the famous General Charles Gordon whose work amongst the underprivileged youth of Britain was his inspiration).

In 1910 Haines (a S.A.C. S. schoolmaster) realized that the boys needed something more than sound bodies to make something worthwhile of their lives so he established night classes, sacrificing all his personal leisure time. These classes were taken over in 1923 by the Department of Education when the Technical College was built.

When the first world war broke out more than 400 Gordons men served their country with distinction. Back home, their womenfolk and sons kept the club going and raised funds for various war funds and charities.

In 1925 Mr Haines bought a dilapidated block of buildings adjacent to the Woodstock station. Standing at the crossroads between the city and the Northern and Southern Suburbs, the new headquarters were ideally sited to serve the youth of the whole Peninsula.

In 1942 tragedy struck. As the age of 64, the man the doctors had told 40 years previously that he had 6 months to live, died.

After the 2nd World War the Gordons Institute consolidated its position as the premier organization of its kind in South Africa under a Committee of Control and in 1951 Gordons

moved to its new home in Mowbray. The building on Liesbeeck Parkway became a landmark in Cape Town and served as the Gordons home until the end of 2002.

Here Gordons expanded & grew in membership with numerous sporting codes opening in the community. The Centre was also extensively used as a function venue and cinema with many Capetonians visiting for social occasions. Gordons became one of the top sporting clubs with the Swimming, Water Polo, Basketball, Badminton and Table Tennis clubs joining the Gymnastics Club and making Gordons a sporting force in Cape Town.

Sadly with time the building became neglected and in need of attention. Most of the codes either closed or moved and once again Gymnastics was left as the foundation. In 2002 an agreement was reached with Damelin College for the building to be converted into an education campus and the Gymnastics club agreed to move. Major renovations were conducted on the building, which is now home to the Damelin Cape Town campus.

Gordons by giving boys and girls a chance to develop to their potential is still at the fore in sporting circles both locally and internationally and hopes to continue the good work for the next 100 years. At present the recreational section offers classes to children from age 18 months, covering physical development to beginner gymnastics classes is conducted from the Mowbray venue just across the road from the previous building.

Gordons Gymnastics Club has various programs to offer :
Gymnastics for All , Men's Artistic Gymnastics , Women's Artistic Gymnastics, Trampoline and Rope Skipping.