

**Rebecca Tinsley (née Bryan)**

**Attended 1970 - 1976**

Looking back on my six years at Saint Martin's School I am struck by the quality of the teaching more than anything. Some schools boast about sophisticated facilities, but what really matters is having teachers that engage you and hold your attention; teachers who are not simply going through the motions; and teachers who share their enthusiasm and motivate their students. In the course of my work I give three dozen talks a year in schools in the US and the UK, and this experience has taught me the value of having first rate teaching staff. I also realise how superb Saint Martin's teachers were, and how fortunate I was to sit in their classes, benefiting from their knowledge and passion for their subjects. Once they had my interest, they cultivated my confidence like conscientious gardeners, with individual attention of a kind unimaginable in most other schools. Their names will stay with me for the end of my days.

After Saint Martin's I did a law degree at the LSE and ended up starting my own charity, Network for Africa, that helps survivors of genocide rebuild their lives. We have ten projects, including a hospital, in Rwanda and Uganda. I also work on human rights issues in Sudan, supplying evidence to the International Criminal Court, and "ghost" writing articles for famous people about issues like genocide. My team works closely with the UK government in shaping our policy on Africa, and I also write parliamentary speeches and questions for politicians. In addition, I've had three novels published. After the first novel appeared I wrote to Mrs Bennett, my English teacher at Saint Martin's to thank her for encouraging me to write in the first place. Without her, I would never had the confidence.

Thank you, Mrs Bennett, and thank you Saint Martin's.

