

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0371

Giles, Patricia Jessie (Pat)

(1928 - 2017)

Born 16 November, 1928, Minlaton South Australia Australia

Died 9 August, 2017

Occupation Nurse, Political activist, Politician

Summary

Pat Giles commenced her working life as a nurse. After completing a Bachelor of Arts as a mature age student, she was an Organiser with the Hospital Employees Union of Western Australia from 1974 until 1981. In that year Giles was elected as an Australian Labor Party (ALP) Senator for Western Australia, and held the position for twelve years. During this time she was directly involved in the United Nations Decade for Women meetings, leading the government delegation to Nairobi in 1985.

Giles was a founding member and inaugural convenor of the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) WA in 1973 and was the first woman on the executive of the West Australian Trades and Labour Council. She was a member, later Chairperson, of the first Australian Council of Trade Unions Women's Committee. In 2004 Giles completed her third and final term as President of the International Alliance of Women. In 2010, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

Events

1983 - 1985

Junior Vice-President of the ALP

1974 - 1981

Organiser of the Hospital Employees' Union WA

1953 - 1953

Married Keith Giles (FFARCS, FFAARCS) (diss. 1976), they had four daughters

1950 - 1950

Obtained Certificate in General Nursing

1951 - 1951

Obtained Certificate in Midwifery

1974 - 1974

Graduated with a BA from the University of Western Australia

1976 - 1979

Member of the Administrative Committee for the ALP (WA)

1981 - 1981

Western Australian delegate to the ALP National Conference

1979 - 1979

First woman to argue an important general issue before the WA State Industrial Commission (Maternity Leave which was granted to women in private employment, January 1980)

1975 - 1975

First woman elected to the executive of the WA Trades & Labour Council

1975 - 1980

Service industries representative on the WA Trades & Labour Council

1974 - 1974

First woman to chair a committee on Discrimination in Employment & Occupation

1978 - 1978

Member of the first ACTU Women's Committee

1979 - 1981

ACTU representative member of the first tripartite committee on women's employment in Australia (sub-committee of the National Labour Consultative Committee on Women's Employment)

1971 - 1974

Vice-president of the WA Council of State School Organizations

1971 - 1981

Executive member of the Health Education Council of WA

1978 - 1981

Member of the Review Committee for the WA Legal Aid Commission

1973 -

Inaugural convenor and member of WEL Perth

1975 - 1981

Member of the Homeless Persons Advisory Committee in WA

2004 - 2004

Speaker at the 19th Mary Owen Dinner

1952 - 1952

Obtained Certificate in Infant Welfare

1995 - 1996

Chaired the World Health Organisations's Global Commission on Women's Health

1981 - 1993

Senator (ALP) for Western Australia

1986 - 1986

Temporary Chairman of Committees

1979 - 1981

Member of the Community Advisory Committee in Industrial Relations for the University of WA

Published resources

Book Section

Giles, Pat, Grahame, Emma, 1998

[Patricia Jessie Giles - biography and key parliamentary speech], 1994

Edited Book

Who's Who in Australia, 1988, Cadman, Kerith A, 1988

Who's Who of Australian Women, Lofthouse, Andrea, 1982

Journal Article

One thing led to another : a life of activism in support of women's rights, an interview with Pat Giles., Skene, Judy., 1999

Interviews with famous feminists., 1997

[Patricia Jessie Giles - awarded Honorary Degree by Murdoch University. Career details], 1996

Irene Greenwood; a hero of the feminist movement 1899-1992., Giles, Patricia, 1999

Sound recording

[Interview with Pat Giles and Wendy Fatin], Speed, Sally., 1982

[Interview with Patricia Giles, politician], Reid, Stuart, 1953-, 1988

Conference Paper

Irene Greenwood: 1899(sic)-1992, a hero of the feminist movement, Giles, Patricia, 1997

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Site Exhibition

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders>

Archival resources

State Library of Western Australia

[Pat Giles papers 1974-1986 \[manuscript\]](#)

Author Details

Anne Heywood

Created 17 April 2002

Last modified 8 August 2019