

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: AWE0601

Dow, Gwyneth Maude

(1920 - 1996)

Born 19200814, Caulfield Victoria Australia

Died 19960906, East Melbourne Victoria Australia

Occupation Academic

Summary

Gwyneth Dow was appointed as a Lecturer in the Education Faculty at the University of Melbourne in 1958, a Senior Lecturer in 1963 and Reader in 1970. She was an inaugural member of the Steering Committee of the Curriculum Advisory Board in Victoria, and fostered pilot schemes to introduce curriculum and organisational changes in secondary schools. She published several reports relating to these schemes. She introduced a Diploma of Education Course "Systems of Education" and was instrumental in introducing an alternative Diploma of Education Course, Course B, which concentrated on method and practical teaching in the first year. Gwyneth Dow, a descendant of the early colonial Terry family, began researching the family history in 1965 after writing an article on Samuel and Rosetta for the Australian Dictionary of Biography.

Details

Gwyneth Maude Dow, nee Terry took her BA and DipEd in 1957, her MEd in 1961 and DEd in 1984. Before beginning a long career in academia she worked as a personnel officer during the war as one of the first industrial welfare officers employed in Melbourne factories and taught in schools in Australia and England. She was briefly married to the journalist Rohan Rivett. The couple lost two babies. In 1947 she married Hume Dow, a member of the English Department and author of two books of University recollections.[1]

Engaged as a Lecturer in the Education Faculty at the University of Melbourne in 1958 after part-time work in 1957, Gwyneth Dow rose to Reader in 1970. She was proponent of change in both the school curriculum and teacher education. As a foundation member of the Victorian Curriculum Advisory Board, on which she served from 1966 to 1970, chairing it for the last seven years, she wrote many of its papers, in which she

emphasised teaching was an art and stressed the importance of care, human relationships, spontaneity, imagination and intuition in teaching. She also argued passionately against streaming, IQ testing, the use of 'teacher-proof resources' and the transmission of inert ideas in classrooms.[2]

She introduced a DipEd course in Systems of Education, and 1973 saw the launch of the Course B she had designed and worked for some years to establish. This course placed Education students in schools for three days a week with a stress on interdisciplinary curriculum studies and methods work.

Gwyneth Dow was also an active unionist, succeeding, through the Victorian Teachers' Union, in achieving permanent status for married women teachers.

In retirement she devoted much of her scholarly attention to Tasmanian and family history. A book based on her Master's thesis had been published in 1964. In 1974 her biography of her great-great grandfather, Samuel Terry, a convict who became the richest man in NSW and one of the largest shareholders in the Bank of New South Wales, appeared.[3] In 1990 she and her husband published a history of an Oxfordshire yeoman family in Tasmania entitled *Landfall in Van Diemen's Land*. [4]

[1] Hume Dow. *Memories of Melbourne University: Undergraduate Life in the Years since 1917*. Melbourne: Hutchinson of Australia, 1983; Hume Dow. *More Memories of Melbourne University: Undergraduate Life in the Years since 1919*. Melbourne: Hutchinson, 1985.

[2] Anne Longmire. 'Revolutionising Education For All: Dr Gwyneth Maude Dow Educational Reformer and Historian. *Age*. 1 October 1 1996.

[3] Gwyneth M. Dow. *George Higinbotham: Church and State*. Melbourne: Pitman, 1964; Gwyneth M. Dow. *Samuel Terry: the Botany Bay Rothschild*. Sydney: University Press; Portland, Or: International Scholarly Book Services, 1974.

[4] Gwyneth and Hume Dow. *Landfall in Van Diemen's Land: the Steels' Quest for Greener Pastures*. Melbourne: Footprint, 1990.

Published resources

Resource Section

Terry, Samuel, Dow, Gwyneth M, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A020468b.htm>

Book

Samuel Terry :the Botany Bay Rothschild, Dow, Gwyneth M, 1974

Learning to teach, teaching to learn, Dow, Gwyneth, 1979

40 Years 40 Women: Biographies of University of Melbourne Women, Published to Commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the International Year of Women, Flesch, Juliet, 2015,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/4040/>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

The University of Melbourne Archives

[Dow, Gwyneth](#)

[Dow Family](#)

[Dow, Gwyneth](#)

Author Details

Anne Heywood and Juliet Flesch

Created 15 October 2003

Last modified 8 May 2026