

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: AWE0838

Somerville, Dorothy Catherine

(1897 - 1992)

Born 12 May, 1897, Unley South Australia Australia

Died 31 December, 1992

Occupation Lawyer, Solicitor

Summary

The daughter of Archibald and Seca (née Lewin) Somerville, Dorothy Somerville was educated at Brownhill Creek School in Mitcham, the Methodists Ladies College (now Annesley College) and the Adelaide Law School. She was the third woman admitted to practice law in South Australia in 1922. Mary Kitson, the first woman admitted to the Bar, joined with Somerville in 1925 to form Australia's first women's legal partnership: Kitson & Somerville. Kitson later went to Sydney to work in publishing, and in 1950 she moved to New York to take charge of the United Nations affairs on the Status of Women. Somerville, who continued with the legal practice, became an honorary solicitor to a number of women's organisations.

Events

1955 - 1955

Honorary solicitor to the Women's Memorial Playing Fields

1921 - 1921

Foundation Member of the Lyceum Club (Adelaide) Incorporated

1971 - 1971

Honorary Life member of the Lyceum Club (Adelaide) Incorporated

1945 - 1945

Honorary Life member of the South Australian Women's Hockey Association

1945 - 1945

Honorary solicitor to the Wanslea Inc (Emergency Homes for Children)

1948 - 1975

Honorary solicitor to the Australian Croquet Council

1986 - 1986

Appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for service to the Legal profession and to the community

1919 - 1919

Graduated Bachelor of Arts (BA) (Hons) from Adelaide University

1922 - 1922

Graduated Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from Adelaide University

1925 - 1925

Solicitor in private practice

1925 - 1971

Honorary solicitor to the Country Women's Association (SA)

1925 - 1974

Honorary solicitor to the South Australian Women's Hockey Association

1925 - 1925

Honorary solicitor to the South Australian Women's Croquet Association

Published resources

Book

Greater than their knowing: a glimpse of South Australian women 1836-1986, National Council of Women of South Australia, 1986

Edited Book

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

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Resource Section

Law, Kerwin, Hollie and Rubenstein, Kim, 2014,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0624b.htm>

Site Exhibition

Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens, Trailblazing Women Lawyers Project Team, 2016,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/lawyers>

Archival resources

State Library of South Australia

[Interview with Dorothy Somerville \[sound recording\] Interviewer: Yvonne Abbott](#)

National Library of Australia

[\[Biographical cuttings on Dorothy Somerville, solicitor, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals\]](#)

Author Details

Anne Heywood and Robin Secomb

Created 6 April 2004

Last modified 1 November 2016