Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0946

Newport, Mary Helen

(1927 - 2013)

Born	19270115
Died	20131013
Occupation	Public servant

Summary

Mary Newport was born and completed her primary and secondary education in Adelaide. She won scholarships to St. Aloysius College and Chartres Business College. Newport had the ability to go to university but the economic pressure (because her mother had died after a long battle with cancer when Mary was 12 years old) to work as great. When Newport was old enough, she joined the Commonwealth Public Service, first in the Taxation Office in Adelaide and then in Canberra. During her Long Service Leave in 1959, Newport worked at Australia House in London and the Australian Embassy in London. On her return to Australia, Newport was invited to work with the Press Secretary of the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies. Although, she was writing many of the Prime Minister's statements, her salary was so minimal that the Government had to pay a subsidy to the boarding house where most public servants lived. When Sir Robert Menzies retired, the press team of Tony Eggleton and Mary Newport continued in the Prime Minister's Department, first for Harold Holt, then Sir John McEwan, John Gorton and Sir William McMahon. During this time Newport completed a degree by part-time study at the Australian National University. When the Australian Labor Party came into Government in 1975, Newport returned to work in various Commonwealth Departments and assisted with various Commissions of Inquiries. From these investigations, Newport learnt a great deal about working conditions of public servants and the criminal activities within the Painters and Dockers Union. In 1988, she resigned from the Commonwealth Public Service to become the first national media officer for the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference. She worked there until 1995. Mary Newport was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community through the National Catholic Media Office, the Newman Graduate Association and for public service, on 26 January 1997. She also is a Dame of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

Published resources

Newspaper Article
Newport's role

Conference Proceedings
Australian Catholic Bishops' statements 1985-1995, Newport, Mary, 1997

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Site Exhibition
From Lady Denman to Katy Gallagher: A Century of Women's Contributions to Canberra, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2013,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/ldkg

Archival resources

National Library of Australia
[Biographical cuttings on Mary Helen Newport, public servant, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

State Library of South Australia
Interview with Mary Helen Newport [sound recording] Interviewer: Peter Donovan

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