Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE1269

Barry, Mary Kathleen

(1925 - 2016)

Born	19250306, Forest Lodge New South Wales Australia
Died	20160510, Sydney New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Activist, Political candidate, Public speaker, Real estate agent

Summary

Mollie Barry's varied career as an activist, ALP member and mentor for young people exemplifies the commitment to social involvement so common among her generation. She was an ALP candidate for Coogee in 1971.

Details

Mollie Barry married Michael Oliver Barry in 1947. They had four children. She worked as a bank officer and interviewer for the Australian Bureau of Statistics Workforce Survey, Sydney, in the 1960s, after the births of her four children. She gained a real estate qualification and was the only female real estate sales representative for LJ Hooker in Sydney's eastern suburbs, 1971-73. She enrolled in an Arts degree as a mature age student, but did not complete the course.

An active member of the ALP with a lifetime interest in politics, she joined the South Pacific Toastmistress Club and became an accomplished public speaker. Mrs Barry noted that women gained confidence and a stronger sense of themselves as their ability to speak in public improved. She adjudicated youth debates and was a member of the Youth of the Year committee.

On a tour of parliament she was appalled at the low level of language and debate on the floor of parliament, and decided to stand for the ALP, against the speaker Sir Kevin Ellis, when she was approached by branch members. Her preselection for Coogee was opposed by Labor's Head Office, but she won convincingly. She was described in the Sydney Morning Herald as a "vigorous candidate". She lost the election but received the biggest swing to Labor in the metropolitan area.

Mrs Barry was a member of Christian Women Concerned, a multidenominational group of women working for social justice, and Labor Women's Organising Committee.

Published resources

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Site Exhibition
Putting Skirts on the Sacred Benches: Women Candidates for the New South Wales Parliament, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2006,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/pssb/home.html

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Created 25 August 2005
Last modified 22 October 2020