

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE1964

Ruiz Wall, Deborah

(1949 -)

Nationality Filipino

Born 1 January, 1949, Manila Philippines

Occupation Community worker

Summary

Since migrating to Australia in 1974 with her husband David and first child, Deborah has established a successful career in teaching in the New South Wales Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system and has become a powerful voice in public advocacy, especially on the behalf of Filipina women and Indigenous Australians.

Details

Born in Manila in 1949, Deborah is the middle child in a family of four daughters, one of whom died in infancy. Having graduated from the University of the Philippines with a degree in Journalism and Communications in 1971, Deborah quickly found a position in the Philippines Broadcasting Service, before moving to Papua New Guinea in 1973, where she was appointed to the position of Press Secretary for the Opposition Leader.

In 1974, in response to an Australian Broadcasting Commission story reporting on teacher shortages in Australia, Deborah and her husband David decided to move to Australia. In April 1974 they made the long journey to Sydney on *Arcadia*. Once in Sydney Deborah rejected the social pressure to be a 'stay at home' mother and made the decision to work. Her considerable skills in the media and communications area were highly marketable in the expanding TAFE system. With a portfolio of speeches written in PNG but no formal qualifications, she managed to convince an interview panel that she was a good prospect. She started work in 1975 and established herself as an innovator in the teaching of media, communications and public relations

Before long, Deborah had joined the Philippine Action Support Group, but by the late 1970s and early 1980s, her attention had turned to more local issues. She helped to establish the Filipino Women's Working Party, which produced a training kit in 1992, *Dealing with the Media*, to assist community workers in dealing with journalists who seldom looked beyond 'mail order bride' stereotypes when representing Filipina women. Two years later, in collaboration with SBS radio, the working group developed a series of programs aimed at educating Filipino migrants about government services available to them, including information on how to deal with racism.

Beyond this, Deborah works hard to promote reconciliation in this country between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. She holds the position of non-indigenous Regional Representative for Sydney, New South Wales Reconciliation Council and she is a Member of the Board. She is the convenor of the Redfern Residents for Reconciliation, contributing significantly to the establishment of the Redfern Community Centre that was opened in 2004. She is also a member of the Women's Reconciliation Network that produced an educational video resource, *Around the Kitchen Table*, featuring work on reconciliation by women from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, English, Irish, Filipino, Greek, Jewish and Muslim communities.

In 2004, Deborah Ruiz Wall received the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) from the Australian Commonwealth Government for service to the community in the areas of social justice, reconciliation and multiculturalism.

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Author Details

Barbara Lemon

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