The Australian
Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE3127

Rodan, Florence Victoria

(1900 - 1981)

Born	19000101, Epsom, Bendigo Victoria Australia
Died	19810309, Box Hill Victoria Australia
Occupation	Political candidate

Summary

Florence Rodan, a member of the League of Women Voters and its president from 1961-63, stood for the Victorian parliament three times; in 1945, 1952 and 1955. She stood as an Independent in the Legislative Assembly seat of Borung at the 1945 state election, represented the Australian Labor Party in the Legislative Assembly seat of Camberwell in 1952 and the seat of Balwyn in 1955.

Details

Florence Victoria Rodan (nee Lamb), and her brother George Hamilton Lamb, twins, were born in Epsom, Bendigo on 1 January 1900. Their parents were William Edward and Sarah Victoria Lamb (nee Irwin). William was an auctioneer and school teacher and Sarah Lamb was a teacher at Fineview, Dooen and Pomonal. The family settled in Stawell in about 1912. Florence completed her secondary education at Stawell High School and later gained a Diploma of Music and completed Drama courses. She married William James Rodan at Christchurch, South Yarra in 1928. Florence came to Horsham from Canberra when her husband was appointed town engineer in 1940. After a teaching career, her brother, George Hamilton Lamb went on to become a state Member of Parliament in the Legislative Assembly seat of Lowan for the Country Party from 1935 until his death in 1943. He joined the Australian Imperial Forces in 1940 as a private but was quickly promoted to Lieutenant, sent overseas, captured and died from malnutrition in a Prisoner of War camp in Thailand in December 1943. William Rodan died in July 1944 as a result of World War One injuries. Florence was left to rear her three children, Brian, Marie and Erskine and her brother's three, Winston, Anthony and Ainslie. The Lamb children's mother died in 1940 before Hamilton left to go overseas. Florence moved to Melbourne in 1950 for the children to continue their education. Florence's father died when she was in her 20s and her mother came to live with her during the 1940s.

Florence's brother Hamilton impressed upon her the importance of women being interested in politics.

I was a busy wife and mother with three very young children – a baby and two toddlers. I had no time for outside interests, until one day my brother visited us at our little home in Canberra and gave me my first lesson in political philosophy. When he spoke of it I said that I was too busy to discuss such things as politics. He said 'If you don't think of these things, you will have no home to be busy about.' From that time onwards I read in my spare moments, listened to debates in the House, studying everything I could get hold of (in between washing clothes and cleaning up after the children). I learned the fundamental truths. I learned why women should interest themselves in the affairs of the State and the Nation.

She followed her brother's example even when she had the responsibility for the care of six children. She stood as an Independent candidate for the Legislative Assembly seat of Borung at the 1945 state election. She also stood for Horsham Council twice, unsuccessfully. She joined the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and stood as a candidate for Camberwell at the 1952 election, with the slogan, 'Rodan is right- Cain is able'. She topped the poll, but was defeated on preferences. She was the only endorsed woman candidate for the ALP at that election. She stood again in 1955, but for the seat of Balwyn.

An active member of the Australian Labor Party in the 1950s and 1960s, Florence was a member and president of the Labor Women's Central Organising Committee during the 1950s and stood for ALP pre-selection to the Senate in 1956. In an article in the Melbourne Sun newspaper she was reported as urging women to become active in politics. 'They'll have to come out of their kitchens and think if they want to get anywhere.' She accused women of being mentally lazy.

She served as president of the League of Women Voters from 1961-63, acting president in 1966 and was president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Victoria. She published a volume of her brother's writings entitled *Poems and Essays* in 1945. She was president of the R.S. L. Women's Auxiliary in Horsham before moving to Melbourne in 1950.

Published resources

Book
Poems and Essays, Lamb, Hamilton, 1945?

Site Exhibition
Carrying on the Fight: Women Candidates in Victorian Parliamentary Elections, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2008,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/cws/home.html

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Author Details
Rosemary Francis

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Digital resources



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