Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE3506

Downing, Jean Olive

(1923 -)

Born	19231222, Dubbo New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Businesswoman, Local government councillor, Political candidate, Social worker

Summary

Jean Downing stood as a candidate for the Australian Labor Party in the Legislative Assembly seat of Doncaster at the Victorian state election, which was held on 5 May 1979. She was also a candidate in the 1977 Federal election for the seat of Diamond Valley. In 1978 she was elected as a councillor to the Eltham Shire Council and served a three year term.

Downing embarked on her political career after having made a significant and enduring contribution to the discipline of Social Work at the University of Melbourne. over many decades. In 2016 she was awarded the University of Melbourne's Hyslop Medal, an award that recognises alumni or staff whose outstanding contributions have been integral to the success of social work at the University.

Details

Jean Downing was educated at public primary schools in New South Wales and Victoria before completing her secondary education at Presbyterian Ladies' College (PLC) in Melbourne in 1939. In 1946 she completed her tertiary education at the University of Melbourne with a Bachelor of Arts and Diploma of Social Studies. She was the first appointee as a Social Worker to the Children's Court Psychiatric clinic in Melbourne.

In 1947 she married Arthur Howard Norman and had five sons and two daughters, including two sets of twins. After Howard Norman's death in 1959 she assumed responsibility for managing the family firm, Norman Bros. Pty Ltd until 1978.

In 1965 she married Richard Ivan Downing Professor of Economics at the University of Melbourne. They had a daughter.

After 1976 she returned to Social Work with appointments at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital, the International Social Service, the Austin Hospital and the Department of Social Security.

In 1978 she was elected to the Eltham Shire Council and served a three year term.

Her voluntary appointments included serving on the Councils of the University of Melbourne, (1983-87) PLC, Coburg State College, College of the Arts, Eltham High School, Equal Opportunity Advisory (1983) and the Board of Social Studies at the University of Melbourne.

She is a member of the Lyceum Club and the Catalysts.

Published resources

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

Edited Book
Who's Who in Australia, 1988, Cadman, Kerith A, 1988

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection
Jean Downing interviewed by Susan Marsden [sound recording]

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