Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE3955

Rogers, Mary Catherine

(1872 - 1932)

Born	18720802, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Died	19320925, Richmond Melbourne Victoria Australia
Occupation	Lawyer, Local government councillor, Magistrate, Political party organiser, Trade unionist

Summary

Mary Rogers became the first woman councillor in Victoria when she was elected to the Richmond City Council in 1920. She was appointed as organiser for the Victorian branch of the Australian Labor Party.

Details

Mary Rogers was raised in East Melbourne, where she attended a local Catholic school. In 1900 she married Patrick Denis Rogers and the pair had five children, though one died in infancy. Patrick, an upholsterer, had been president of the Furniture Trades Union. Mary, employed as a cleaner after the death of her husband in 1910, became president of the Women Office Cleaners' Union, and later vice-president of the Miscellaneous Workers' Union.

Rogers maintained a long-term involvement with the Australian Labor Party, becoming organiser for its Victorian Branch in 1918, and president of its Women's Organizing Committee. In 1920 she was elected to the Richmond City Council at a by-election, making her Victoria's first woman councillor, and worked to improve the living conditions of Richmond's poor. Rogers was also one of the first women appointed as a justice of the peace in Victoria and became a special magistrate at the Children's Court in Richmond. She served for some time as secretary of the welfare committee of the Catholic Women's Social Guild.

Mary Rogers died of cancer in 1932, and was buried at Boroondara cemetery, Kew.

Events

2001 - 2001
Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

Published resources

Resource Section
Rogers, Mary Catherine (1872-1932), Cunneen, Chris and Torney, Kim, 2006,
http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10415b.htm

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book
Women in Australian Parliaments and Local Governments, Past and Present : A Survey, Smith, A. Viola, 1975

Newspaper Article
Woman to light up pedestrian lights for the first time, Worrall, Allison, 2016,
http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/woman-to-light-up-pedestrian-lights-for-the-first-time-20160307-gnctll.html

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Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens, Trailblazing Women Lawyers Project Team, 2016,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/lawyers

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Created 25 November 2008
Last modified 20 November 2018