

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4780

Curphey, Judith

(1929 - 2025)

Born 19290917, Melbourne Victoria Australia

Died 20251031, Melbourne Victoria Australia

Occupation Artistic director, Music teacher, Musician

Summary

Judith Curphey OAM was the founder and Artistic Director of the Australian Girls Choir. Judith enjoyed a successful career as a classroom music teacher before starting the Choir upon her retirement in 1984.

Judith wanted to challenge the accepted convention that boys sing 'better' than girls, and create a female choir with a uniquely Australian sound and high artistic standards, a group of girls and young women which could dance as well as sing, and was renowned for its quality of presentation. She was still playing an integral role with repertoire selection, performance direction and staff mentoring into her nineties.

The Choir has grown from just 150 choristers in Melbourne, to now over 3,500 choristers in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. Since its formation it has toured to destinations all over the world, and has performed for dignitaries including President Barack Obama, Queen Elizabeth II, The Honourable Julia Gillard AC and Pope Benedict XVI.

Events

1943 - 1943

at Presbyterian Ladies College, Perth, Western Australia

2004 - 2004

Awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for services to music, particularly through the Australian Girls Choir.

1929 - 1929

Born in Melbourne, Victoria

1963 - 1965

Commences career as classroom music teacher at The MacRobertson Girls' High School

1957 - 1957

Daughter Jane Curphey is born

1984 -

Founder and Artistic Director of the Australian Girls Choir (AGC). Auditions girls around schools in Melbourne and selects 150 girls who attended the first rehearsal on 7 March 1984 at Burwood State College (now Deakin University).

1953 - 1953

Marries Rex Curphey, moves to London. Works as a piano accompanist at a ballet school.

1935 - 1935

Moved with Family to Perth, Western Australia

1966 - 1974

Moves to Kew High School as a music teacher, becomes Head of Music

1975 - 1983

Moves to Ringwood High School (now Ringwood Secondary College) as Director of Music

1948 - 1948

Retruns to Melbourne, enters Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and completes Performers' Diploma

1956 - 1956

Returns to Melbourne

1938 - 1938

Schooled as a boarder at Loreto Convent, Perth, Western Australia (Now John XXIII College)

1955 - 1955

Son Simon Curphey is born

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Author Details

Nikki Henningham

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