Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4782

Wardle, Patience Australie

(1910 - 1992)

Born	19100620, Sydney New South Wales
Died	19920422, Canberra Australian Capital Territory
Occupation	Librarian, Teacher

Details

Pat was born in Hornsby, Sydney, New South Wales on 20 June 1910, the eldest of the four daughters of Dr Robin Tillyard and Patricia Tillyard (birth name Craske). Her sisters were Faith, Alison Hope and Honor. She attended Abbotsleigh School from 1917 to 1920 when the family moved to Nelson, New Zealand where she attended Nelson Girls' College, successfully completing her university entrance examinations. Despite the protestations of the daughters, the family then moved to Canberra in 1928 where her father, Dr Robin Tillyard, took up the position of first head of the then Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Division of Entomology.

She won one of the first three Canberra Scholarships to attend the University of Sydney. She stayed at the Women's College and was a member of the Students' Representative Council in 1930. In 1932 she gained an Arts degree with second class honours in Latin. She was an active hockey and cricket player and gained a hockey Blue. She captained the university hockey team and later played international hockey in England.

Pat went to England in 1933 to complete an MA but due to her father's ill health and resulting financial pressures on the family she obtained a teaching position at Liskeard County School in Cornwall where she stayed until 1936. She took the opportunity to travel extensively in the UK where the family had relatives, and also in Europe. She travelled on her trips in the car she christened 'Matilda' and fell in love with Cornwall. She wrote lengthy and frequent correspondence to her parents reporting on every detail of her life. She was also a meticulous diarist. While she was returning to Australia in early 1937 her father died in a motor vehicle accident. Hope was driving the car when the accident happened near Goulburn.

On her return from England she and Hope lived in Canberra with her mother, Patricia at the Dial House in Red Hill, ACT. She was employed first at the fledgling National Library and then at the Parliamentary Library. She had senior roles with the Girl Guides. Pat returned to England in mid-1939 to study for a Diploma in Librarianship but the course was cancelled with the start of World War II. As part of the war effort she and her sister Hope drove ambulances. As Hope was not well they returned in August 1940 to Australia on the *SS Rotorua* escorting evacuee children. Later that year Pat was employed as a Research Librarian with the Department of Commerce.

From 1942 to 1946 she was a commissioned officer in the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF), stationed successively at Uranquinty, Point Cook and Evans Head. She gained the rank of Flight Officer and at her discharge was WAAAF Commandant at Air Force Headquarters. After the war she lived at her mother's new house 'The Spinney', 2 Mugga Way, Forrest, ACT, where she helped set out the garden.

Following her service with the WAAAF Pat joined the Department of Post War Reconstruction where she was on the first Wheat Costs survey in the area of the department that was to become the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

In 1953 she was a foundation member of the Canberra & District Historical Society (CDHS) for which she worked tirelessly for 38 years. She was Newsletter Editor for nearly 30 years until 1982, a Councillor for 20 years (1960 to 1980), President 1965-67 and Vice-President 1970-71. She was heavily involved in the organisation of excursions, giving talks and helping with the upkeep of Blundell's farmhouse, then operated by CDHS. She was made a life member in 1983. Her services to community history were recognised with the award of the Medal of the Order of Australia on 26 January 1990.

In 1955 Pat married Robert Norman Wardle, Director of Veterinary Hygiene, Department of Health. They lived at 49 Melbourne Avenue, Forrest, ACT and in 1963 purchased a 40 acre property near Murrumbateman which they named 'Maitai' after the Tillyard's family home in Nelson, New Zealand and where Bob bred and raised horses. After his death in 1979, Pat continued to visit the property until her death.

In 1981 she moved to a new house at 8 Couvreur Street, Garran, ACT which was designed by her niece Hilary Hewitt, daughter of Hope and Lennox Hewitt. In her seventies she made an overseas trip to England (especially to her beloved Cornwall), Scotland, Norway and Gallipoli. She was strongly involved with St John's Church, Reid, particularly through the St John's Women's Movement and she had many other interests including gardening, natural history and writing. She co-authored with A.W. Martin *Members of the Legislative Council of New South Wales'* (ANU, Canberra, 1959); edited *A Visit to Blundell's Farmhouse* (CDHS, 1972) and wrote the introduction and notes for Eirene Mort's *Old Canberra: A sketchbook of the 1920s* (National Library of Australia, 1987). She also contributed many chapters, journal articles and newsletter entries.

Pat died in a motor vehicle accident on 22 April 1992 when driving her small red utility registration ACT 70. She had lived in Canberra for 56 years.

Published resources

Journal Article
Patience (Pat) Australia Wardle nee Tillyard, Temperly, George, 1992

Newspaper Article
Obituary: Patience Australia Wardle, Burgess, Verona, 1992

Site Exhibition
From Lady Denman to Katy Gallagher: A Century of Women's Contributions to Canberra, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2013,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/ldkg

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

Canberra & District Historical Society
The Papers of Patience Australie Wardle

Author Details
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Digital resources



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