Entry type: Person
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Godfrey-Smith, Anne

(1921 - 2011)

Born	19211130, Launceston Tasmania Australia
Died	20110615, Narrabundah Australian Capital Territory Australia
Occupation	Biochemist, Poet, Producer, Theatre director

Summary

Anne Godfrey-Smith was a poet, theatre director and producer, broadcaster, political activist, and scientist. After studying biochemistry at university, she moved into a career in the theatre starting at the Launceston Players in Tasmania. In 1954 she moved to Canberra and became the manager-producer of the Canberra Repertory Society. It was in Canberra that she made her name as a poet (under the nom de plume Anne Edgeworth), publishing the popular collections, *Poems for Off-Duty Hours* (2007), *Turtles All the Way Down* (2000), and *Poems of Canberra* (1997), among others. She was passionate about community work and was active in the environmental conservation movement, the women's movement, anti-war campaigns and Indigenous rights' advocacy. Later in life, she devoted a lot of time to community radio.

Details

Anne Godfrey-Smith was born in Launceston, Tasmania in 1921. Her father was Bill McIntyre, a respected obstetrician, and her mother was Margaret Edgeworth McIntyre, the first woman Member of Parliament in Tasmania, a founding member of the Launceston Players and a committed community worker. Anne was the granddaughter of Sir Tannatt Edgeworth David, an eminent geologist, Antarctic explorer and academic, and Caroline David who dedicated long service to her local community and was committed to the advancement of women. Her aunt was conservationist and writer Mary Edgeworth David, who wrote about the David family in *Passages of time: An Australian woman, 1890-1974*, published in 1975.

Godfrey-Smith was educated in Launceston as a child and went on to finish her secondary studies at the Frensham School in Mittagong (1935-38). In 1939 she began studying biochemistry at the University of Sydney. She graduated in 1941 and took a job as a pathologist at the Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney.

While in Sydney she met and married Tony Godfrey-Smith. In 1950 they decided to travel to Britain so that her husband could complete postgraduate medical training. Before leaving Australia, the celebrated theatre director Tyrone Guthrie saw one of Godfrey-Smith's productions with the Launceston Players-where she directed and produced the occasional play-and proposed that she too seek further training in England. Guthrie then arranged for her to attend the Stratford-on-Avon Memorial Theatre for five months.

She returned to Launceston later that year to take up formal positions with both the Launceston Players and the Opera Company. She stayed with these companies until 1953 when she accepted a position with the Canberra Repertory Society as the full-time manager-producer.

From 1959 until 1965 she worked as an experimental officer in the CSIRO's biochemistry department. During this time, she also directed many theatre productions for the Australian National University (ANU), including revues that would give her a reputation for being a canny humorist.

She completed a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) at the ANU in 1966, during which time she began writing poetry under the guidance of distinguished poet, Professor A D Hope. She then worked as a tutor in English literature at the University of New South Wales from 1968 until 1974. In 1973 she obtained her Master of Arts in English literature through Flinders University, Adelaide.

In 1975 she was engaged by the Australian Youth Performing Arts Association to undertake a national survey on youth participation in theatre. After the publication of her report she was asked to serve on the Theatre Board of the Australia Council for the Arts.

From 1980 to 1988 she held the position of coordinator of community education at the Reid Technical and Further Education College. During this time she also recorded oral histories of people involved with the Canberra Repertory, eventually compiling them into the book *The Cost of Jazz Garters: A History of the Canberra Repertory Society* (1992).

From 1988 until her death she devoted many hours to community radio, presenting programs on ArtSound FM 92.7.

She was an active member of environmental groups such as the Australian Conservation Foundation, Friends of the Mongarlowe River, the Wilderness Society and Bush Heritage Australia. She was also a member of a number of social justice organisations including Women in Black, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation, Families and Friends for Drug Law Reform, and Amnesty International.

In 1979 she received a British Empire Medal (Civil) for her service to the theatre. In 1994 she was ACT Citizen of the Year and, in 2005, she received a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM), both recognising her service to the arts. In 1998 she was awarded the Sydney University Alumni Award for community service over many years. She died at Jindalee Nursing Home in Narrabundah at the age of 89. She had two sons: Tony Godfrey-Smith and William Godfrey-Smith, now known as William Grey.

Published resources

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book
A View from Two Cities: Selected Poems, Edgeworth, Anne, 1982

The Road to Leongatha, Edgeworth, Anne, 1996

Poems for Off-duty Hours, Edgeworth, Anne, 2007

Purdie's Meditation and other poems, Edgeworth, Anne, 2007

The Cost of Jazz Garters: A History of the Canberra Repertory Society, Edgeworth, Anne, 1992

Youth Performing Arts in Australia, 1975 - 1977, Edgeworth, Anne, 1977

Looking Out, Looking In: Canberra Poets, Cook, Merril; Nugent, Ann and Challis, Pamela, 1994

Looking Still: Canberra Poets, Cook, Merril et al., 1998

Edited Book
The Australian reference dictionary, Edgeworth, Anne, 1991

Resource Section
Godfrey-Smith, Anne,
http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/godfrey-smith-anne-14017

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

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Pictures Collection
Portrait of David Branagan and Anne Edgeworth in the bookshop at the National Library of Australia, 29 October 2004 [picture] / Loui Seselja

Portrait of Anne Edgeworth [picture] / [Terry Milligan]

ACT Heritage Library
HMSS 0063 Anne Edgeworth Collection

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection
Papers of Anne Edgeworth, 1927-1990 [manuscript]

Records of the Canberra Repertory Society, 1936-1971 [manuscript]

National Library of Australia
[Biographical cuttings on Anne Godfrey-Smith, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection
Anne Edgeworth interviewed by Mark O'Connor [sound recording]

Interviews with members of the Canberra Repertory Society [sound recording] / interviewer, Anne Godfrey-Smith

Academia.edu
Memoir for Anne Edgeworth (1921-2011)

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