

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE5106

Greig, Flos

(1880 - 1958)

Born	18801107, Ferry Scotland
Died	19581215, MoorabbinMoorabbin Victoria Australia
Occupation	Barrister, Lawyer, Solicitor

Summary

Flos Greig was a remarkable pioneer whose determination to practise as a solicitor advanced gender equality in the legal profession in Australia in the early twentieth century. The first woman to be admitted to legal practice in Australia, Greig was at the vanguard of 'the graceful incoming of a revolution' as described by then Chief Justice Sir John Madden, as he presided over the ceremony granting her admission to the Victorian bar in August 1905 (The Advertiser, 1905).

Read more about Flos Greig in our sister publication [The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia](#).

Events

2001 - 2001

Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

Published resources

Site Exhibition

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders>

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

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Resource Section

Law, Kerwin, Hollie and Rubenstein, Kim, 2014,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0624b.htm>

Archival resources

State Library of South Australia

[A brief history of the Greig sisters](#)

Author Details

Larissa Halonkin

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THE NEW IDEA.

September 6, 1905.

Informal Interviews

and Casual Conversations

By Henrietta P. Sergeant.

An Australian Lady-Barrister.

Miss Grata F. M. Greig will Champion the Cause of the Women and Children.

Miss Grata F. M. Greig, an excellent portrait of whom we reproduce on next page, holds the unique position of a lady admitted to practise as barrister and solicitor at the Supreme Court of Victoria. Her entry into the legal profession naturally enough aroused no little interest among both barristers and solicitors, and on the occasion of her admission the body of the court presented an unusually animated appearance. Whether Miss Greig was nervous at the moment anticipated through so many years of hard work, she could not be prevailed upon to say. Indeed, a strictly non-committal attitude, speaking well for the thoroughness of her legal training, characterised the lady lawyer's utterances throughout the conversation.

"What did I wear?" Don't ask me!" she responded, blushing at the frivolity of the question I had put her. "Well, if you insist! I wore grey, with a greenish tinted hat, trimmed with violets! The number of on-lookers at the ceremony was very great. It took place on August 1. A little before eleven I came into court, and took my place in the centre of the barristers' bench.

Embryo lawyers are admitted in alphabetical order, and two were called before my turn came. The Chief Justice made a charming speech—possibly you read it—most encouraging and kind—so kind that it quite decided many of my friends that I had not made the mistake they feared in the choice of a vocation. Personally, the career of a barrister and solicitor appeals to me as one eminently suited to women. I was quite a child, a school girl, when I first determined to engage upon it. I took both the B.A. and LL.B. degrees. The B.A. ensures such a good general education, and I have never regretted the time spent in studying for it. Yes, I believe in the higher education for women, and think it but an all factor of discontent, but merely due to progress, enlightenment of thought, and intelligent comprehension of the significance of surroundings, and the more distant dangers of the greater world. Who that once possessed it, would yield education for any bribe the universe could offer? Not you or I. I went straight through the University. Towards the conclusion of my course I had my attention directed to the many obstacles in the path of my full success. I resolved to remove them. In April, 1903, through my efforts, and the efforts of my friends, an Act of Parliament was passed, "to remove some anomalies in the law relating to women," and the 'anomaly' was removed in the following words: 'No person shall by reason of sex be deemed to be under any disability for admission to practise as barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria, any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.' Several feminine aspirants had, before, wished to enter the profession, but the impediments in the way were so great, that they concluded, after consideration, it was not worth while."

THE ARRIVAL OF PORTIA.
The Duke (Chief Justice Sir John Madden): "You are welcome; take your place."
Portia (Miss Greig): "I am informed thoroughly of the cause."
(Drawn for "The New Idea" by Herb Woodhouse.)

Title: An Australian Lady-Barrister

Type: Image

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