Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE5544

Morrison, Sibyl Enid Vera Munro

(1895 - 1961)

Born	18950818, Petersham New South Wales Australia
Died	19611229, Collaroy New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Barrister, Lawyer, Solicitor

Summary

Sibyl Enid Vera Munro Morrison became the first female barrister in New South Wales in June 1924. She was often briefed by fellow pioneering female lawyers, Christian Jollie Smith and Marie Byles, to whom she referred as her ‘sisters-in-law’.

Details

Sibyl Morrison (nee Gibbs) was born on 18 August 1895 at Petersham, Sydney. She had an uncle and half-brother who were lawyers, and graduated from law at the University of Sydney in 1924. She interrupted her legal studies to visit Britain in 1923 where she married a ranch owner, Charles Carlisle Morrison. Known for her fashionable dresses, Morrison asserted that ‘the law is one of the best professions you can take up and one for which women are particularly suited’. She was a member of the National Council of Women of New South Wales and convener of their laws committee. In 1926, when the National Council of Women was advocating uniform Federal marriage and divorce laws, she presented a paper on divorce in Australia.

Sibyl divorced Charles Morrison in 1928 and travelled to London where she was called to the Bar in 1930. She returned to Sydney and married architect Carlyle Greenwell in 1937. After her marriage she ceased to practice as a barrister. In 1940 she was first president of the Law School Comforts Fund, becoming a life vice-president in 1942. She was also involved with the Business and Professional Women’s Club of Sydney. Sibyl Morrison died at Collaroy on 29 December 1961.

Published resources

Resource Section
Sybil Morrison Biography, Brodsky, Juliette, 2011,
http://www.nswbar.asn.au/the-bar-association/pioneering-women/#/2_sybil_morrison

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http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/morrison-sibyl-enid-7664/text13407

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

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

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Digital resources



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NOT MERELY IN NAME



Mrs. Sybil Morrison is not a barrister merely in name. She has proved that she can hold her own in legal arguments in our courts.