

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE5700

Shewcroft, Joyce Eileen

(1912 - 2001)

Born	19120828, Sydney New South Wales Australia
Died	20011028, Bilgola Plateau New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Barrister, Lawyer, Legal advisor, Poet, Writer

Summary

Joyce Shewcroft has been described as 'the first female corporation lawyer in Australia'. She achieved the additional distinction of being the country's first female chair of a credit union when she chaired the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) credit union, which she also co-founded. She was the first woman in New South Wales to qualify for the Bar through private study and the Barristers' Admission Board examination. Admitted to the Bar on 29 May 1942 while in the employ of the ABC, she did not go into private practice until the late 1970s, instead remaining with the ABC for more than three decades, during which time she became its legal advisor. A motivated and able student, Shewcroft graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Sydney on 15 April 1953. She was secretary-treasurer of the PEN Club (Sydney branch), wrote prize-winning poetry, and scripts for radio. She was honorary legal advisor to the NSW Medical Women's Association and the Royal Academy of Dance. Shewcroft succeeded Nerida Goodman (nee Cohen) as the second president of the Women Lawyers' Association of New South Wales and was a member of the Association's Research Committee. On 31 December 1977 she was awarded an OBE for services to the ABC and the law. Shewcroft was later appointed by the Australian Council For Overseas Aid as a commissioner of an Independent Inquiry into East Timor.

Published resources

Thesis

A History of Women in the Legal Profession in New South Wales, O'Brien, Joan M., 1986,
<https://womenlawyersnsw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/History-of-Women-in-Legal-Profession.pdf>

Resource

Women at the New South Wales Bar: The Years to 1975, Women Barraisters Forum, 2011,
<http://archive.nswbar.asn.au/docs/professional/eo/wbf/>

Newspaper Article

Trailblazer, lawyer, poet - a life of firsts, Harris, Jennifer

Site Exhibition

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

Author Details

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