Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE6061

Derham, Rosemary Joan Brudenell

(1921 - 2002)

Born	19210129, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Died	20021215, Toorak Victoria Australia
Occupation	Author

Summary

Rosemary Joan Brudenell Derham was the wife of David Plumley Derham, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne from 1968 to 1982. Rosemary took a keen interest and concern in local engagement and child welfare. She belonged to a number of women's organisations and also served on the Committee of Management of the Royal Children's Hospital.

Details

In many way the life of Rosemary Joan Brudenell, Lady Derham nee White exemplifies that of the wives of Vice-Chancellors of her time and earlier. It was not until later that they continued in independent careers. This is not, however, to suggest that Rosemary Derham was not extremely busy.

Educated at Toorak College, which had moved from Glenferrie Road to Mount Eliza in 1928, she took her BA from the University in March 1944, having married David Plumley Derham (1920-1985) in January the same year.[1] He was to become the foundation Dean of the Monash University Law School and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne from 1968 to 1982.

Rosemary Derham's concern for local engagement and child welfare is documented early in the history of what is now the Fairy Hills Kindergarten Association, which tells us that in 1947 she and her neighbours set up a playgroup in Ivanhoe. Two years later sixteen parents formed a collective, guaranteeing the payment of an annual subscription and thus officially starting the Fairy Hills Playgroup Association.[2]

Many of Rosemary Derham's public engagements were University-related, involving organisations such as the University of Melbourne Auxiliaries and Women of the University Fund, of which she was President from 1976 until her husband's retirement in 1982. Many more, such as membership of the Lyceum and Alexandra clubs, were not. As well as belonging to these women's organisations, Rosemary Derham served on the Committee of Management of the Royal Children's Hospital.

When the Association of Commonwealth Universities held its 10th congress in Sydney in 1968, the executive heads of its member institutions met at the University of Melbourne beforehand, with the Vice-Chancellor's wife assuming a busy schedule of entertainment.

In 1998 Lady Derham published an account of her distinguished father's Gallipoli campaign, entitled *The Silence Ruse*.[3] Sir Brudenell White planned and executed the much-celebrated evacuation of the ANZACs from the peninsula.

[1] Cecily Close. 'Derham, Sir David Plumley (1920-1985)'. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2007; *Argus*. 4 February 1944: 2.

[2] https://www.fairyhills.com.au/history

[3] Rosemary Derham. *The Silence Ruse: escape from Gallipoli; a record and memories of the life of General Sir Brudenell White*. Melbourne: Cliffe Books, 1998.

Published resources

Book
40 Years 40 Women: Biographies of University of Melbourne Women, Published to Commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the International Year of Women, Flesch, Juliet, 2015, http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/4040/

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