The Australian
Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE6063

Funder, Kathleen Rose

(1941 - 1998)

Born	19410919, Wonthaggi Victoria Australia
Died	19980613, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Occupation	Psychologist, Social scientist, Teacher

Summary

Kathleen Rose Funder is recognised for her significant contribution to the Australian Institute of Family Studies, which she joined in 1983 as a Principal Research Fellow. During this time, Kathleen led and participated in research pertaining to the issues that determine family wellbeing. She published widely on her findings.

Kathleen was also an influential public speaker, and regularly contributed to journals, government investigations and the mainstream press.

In 2008, the Kate Funder Scholarships were established. The scholarships provide support for two medical students at the University of Melbourne’s Newman College.

Details

Kathleen Rose Funder nee Brennan took her BA in 1963, MA in 1982 and PhD in 1993.[1] She is one of the relatively small number of women to have a Canberra Street named in her honour. Funder Street in Bruce was proclaimed in 2005. The citation notes that her research had direct practical implications and changed the lives of many.

After graduation Kathleen Funder taught English at Geelong West Technical School and the Emily McPherson College before joining the Department of Education as a psychologist and, with her husband John (Director of the Baker Medical Research Institute from 1990 to 2001), brought up three children, Anna, Hugh and Joshua, all University of Melbourne graduates.

She joined the Australian Institute of Family Studies as a Principal Research Fellow in 1983, beginning a fifteen-year career during which she led and participated in research into the issues that determine family wellbeing – including divorce, single parenthood, care of children, and property rights. She was an influential voice in public debates, contributing to scholarly journals, government investigations and the mainstream press.

Among her many publications were *Settling up: property and income distribution on divorce in Australia*.[2] She was principal author of *Settling down: pathways of parents after divorce* and the sole author of the third title in the trilogy, *Remaking Families: adaptation of parents and children to divorce* informed by research for her PhD dissertation.[3] Many of her contributions to *Family Matters* deal with the rights of children of separating parents, the complexities of access, conflict resolution and the responsibilities of practitioners.

She was a frequent speaker at national and international conferences addressing the meetings in South Africa, Europe and the United States and the Chinese Academy of Social Science in Beijing. Much admired for her skills in both research and debate, she was described as possessed of ‘a rare ability to analyse and convert the driest of statistical collections into a blueprint for change’.[4]

The Kate Funder Scholarships were established in 2008, providing support for two medical students at Newman College. In recognition of Kathleen Funder’s early wish that she had been able to study medicine, the scholarships are normally awarded to women.

[1] Kathleen R. Funder. *Relationships between Expressed and Inventoried Career Choices in Adolescence: a cross-lagged panel correlation analysis*. Thesis (M.A.) — University of Melbourne, 1983; Kathleen R. Funder. Adaptation to Divorce: a longitudinal study of parents and children. Thesis (PhD) — University of Melbourne, 2001

[2] *Settling up: property and income distribution on divorce in Australia*. Compiled by the Australian Institute of Family Studies; editor-in-chief, Peter McDonald. Sydney: Prentice-Hall of Australia, 1986.

[3] Kathleen Funder, Margaret Harrison, Ruth Weston. *Settling down: pathways of parents after divorce*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, 1993: Kathleen Funder. *Remaking Families: adaptation of parents and children to divorce*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, 1996.

[4] John Faulks. ‘Researcher Shed Light on Families in Crisis: Obituary, Kathleen Rose Funder’. *Australian*. 11 July 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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