

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE6075

Maughan, Monica

(1933 - 2010)

Born 19330915, Nukualofa Tongatapu Tonga

Died 20100108, Melbourne Victoria Australia

Occupation Actor

Summary

Monica Maughan's acting career spanned many media and genres, including stage, television, cinema, comedy, drama and ballet.

Throughout her career she was awarded two 'Erik' awards, three Green Room Awards and two AFI awards.

Details

Monica Maughan, was born in Tonga, where her father, Harold Alfred Wood (1896-1989) was head of Tupou College at Nafualu, near Nuku'alofa, Tonga. He later became Principal of Methodist Ladies' College, Melbourne for almost thirty years. Her birth name was Monica Cresswell Wood.

Few actors in Australia were better known in so many media and genres, covering stage, television and cinema, comedy, drama and ballet. Monica Maughan began her acting career while at the University of Melbourne, appearing with Barry Humphries, Robin Ramsay, Maggie Millar, Dennis Olsen, Germaine Greer and Richard Pratt. Her obituary in *The Age* noted that:

The multi-award-winning Maughan, whose more than 100 theatre credits cover just about every memorable play produced by Australia's leading theatre companies – plus nine stage plays in Britain – also appeared in four short films, 18 feature films, 42 television drama and comedy shows, and twice with the Australian Ballet.^[1]

She took her BA in 1960 from the University of Melbourne and spent 1963 to 1968 in Britain, returning to a stellar performance in the first production of the newly-renamed Melbourne Theatre Company (formerly the Union Theatre Repertory Company) as Miss Jean Brodie. The role won her the first of two 'Erik' awards. This annual award is named in honour of Erich Kuttner, a German refugee actor who came to Australia in 1939. The second was awarded in 1971 for her performance as Anna Bowers in *Three Months Gone* by Donald Howarth. Monica Maughan's other awards included three Green Room Awards for best supporting actress, one for best actress and two AFI awards.

Her television parts included roles in series on commercial television in *The Box* and *Prisoner*. The role of Monica McHugh in the ABC's *The Damnation of Harvey McHugh* won her a Silver Logie as Most Outstanding Actress in 1995. She toured Australia between 1988 and 1992 playing Miss Prism in the MTC production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* with Frank Thring, Geoffrey Rush and Ruth Cracknell. As well as appearing twice with the Australian Ballet she played the piano live on stage in Justin Fleming's award-winning *Burnt Piano*. One of her last and best-received cinema performances was in *The Road to Nhill*, the 1997 film directed by Sue Brooks.

^[1] Gerry Carman. "Wonderful' Thespian a Real Trouper'. *Age*. 9 January 2010.

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/>

Author Details

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