

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE6085

Taylor, Mabel Dowling

(1911 - 1997)

Born	19110101
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Died	19971231
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Occupation	Diarist, Physiotherapist, Traveller
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Details

Mabel Dowling Taylor, nee Woods studied physiotherapy at the time when its practitioners were referred to as masseurs. In 1906 the Australasian Massage Association (later the Massage Registration Board) was formed, initially offering a two-year course which extended to three years in 1933. Melbourne students attended classes run through the University's Department of Physiology. Mabel Woods received her diploma of Massage, Medical Electricity & Medical Gymnastics in 1935. The Association was renamed the Australian Physiotherapy Association during the Second World War, but the University of Melbourne Department of Physiotherapy was not established until 1991.

Mabel Woods married Geoffrey Edward Acteson Taylor (1902-1981), a Ballarat pharmacist, in 1938.^[1] She remained in practice in Ballarat, where she brought up their three children, for over thirty years. The University of Melbourne Archives holds not only her annotated student notebook and framed diploma, but also tennis trophies awarded in 1929 and 1934 as well as a photograph of the man she was to marry with Colin McKenzie Henry, a future Air Commodore.

Mabel Taylor's papers, held in the State Library of Victoria, reveal an enterprising and enthusiastic traveller and diarist. She kept not only daily journals and trip books, but mementoes such as the certificates awarded to people who crossed the Equator on ocean liners, together with menus from trips in the Concorde as well as on ships and a short autobiographical note. Her copy of a souvenir album of the trip to Canberra by the Victorian Branch of the English Speaking Union, which she herself does not appear to have taken, provides some fascinating views of the capital city under construction.^[2]

Mabel Taylor was involved with the Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship, was a donor member of the Ballarat Historical Park Association, and had a keen interest in Ballarat and its history. She was awarded a posthumous Medal of the Order of Australia on 26 January 1999 for service to the community of Ballarat.

[1] 'Weddings of Widespread Interest'. *Argus*. 2 May 1938: 7.

[2] 'English Speaking Union Victorian Branch Inspection of National City'. *Canberra Times*. 10 September 1926:1, 6.

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/>

Archival resources

State Library of Victoria

Papers, ca. 1948-1995 [manuscript].

Author Details

Juliet Flesch

Created 31 July 2017

Last modified 8 August 2017