Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE6470

Wisewould, Gweneth

Occupation   Anaesthetist, Medical practitioner, Surgeon

Details

When Gweneth Wisewould graduated from medicine at the University of Melbourne in 1915 she was one of four women in a class of 50. With war raging, her medical skills were in high demand on the home front. For a short time she and her female colleagues received the same wage as male graduates.

As men returned from the war, the shortage of qualified medical men was no longer a problem. Women doctors' wages quickly dropped to 75% of the male wage.

In 1917, Wisewould set up private practice in St Kilda, Elsternwick and the city. She was also performing surgery at the Queen Victoria Hospital and Senior Resident at the Queen's Memorial Infectious Diseases Hospital. During 1918 – 1929 she instructed medical students at the Alfred Hospital in anaesthetics and held the position of anaesthetist there between 1920 and 1925.

In 1938, Wisewould was caught up in a controversy at the Queen Victoria Hospital. The nature of the controversy is still unclear but she left Melbourne and relocated to country Victoria.

At the time, Trentham was an isolated community, spread over rugged terrain. She worked as a general practitioner within that community until her death in 1972.

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