Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0004

Menzies, Pattie Mae

(1899 - 1995)

Born	18990302, Alexandra Victoria Australia
Died	19950830
Occupation	Community worker

Summary

On 1 January 1954, Pattie Menzies was appointed Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire (Civil). The official citation, conferring the GBE to her under her married name, Mrs R. G. Menzies, read: “In recognition for her years of incessant and unselfish performance of public duty in hospital work, in visiting, addressing and encouraging many thousands of women in every State of Australia, including very remote areas, and in the distinguished representation of Australia on a number of occasions overseas.”

Details

Daughter of John William (later Senator) and May Beatrice (née Johnston) Leckie, Pattie Mae Leckie was born in Alexandra, Victoria. The eldest daughter of a farmer turned politician she attended Fintona Girls’ School. In 1953 there she returned to open new buildings, along with her husband, the Rt. Hon. R. G. (later Sir Robert) Menzies.

Pattie Leckie met Robert Menzies in 1919, and the couple were married on 27 September 1920. The Menzies had four children, one of whom died at birth. Throughout their 58 years of marriage Dame Pattie was involved with charitable work whenever possible. Dame Pattie was appointed Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire in recognition of her charitable work. She received this honour nine years prior to her husband receiving his knighthood (1963).

On 19 September 1995, Kate Carnell, Chief Minister of the ACT, in a tribute to Dame Pattie, stated: “[Dame Pattie] had great concerns for her fellow citizens, particularly for women. She was mindful of the importance of recognising the role of women in the development of the nation…Dame Pattie excelled at making people feel at ease and was at home talking to people from all walks of life. She supported community work…I am sure many former girl guides and brownies…remember cleaning the silver at the Lodge for Dame Pattie as part of Bob-a-Job Week.”

Dame Pattie’s life spanned 96 years. During that time she lived through two world wars, the depression and the postwar reconstruction of Australia. Sir Robert (1972) and two sons predeceased Dame Pattie. In 1992 she returned from Melbourne to Canberra, where she had spent many years during the time that Sir Robert was prime minister, to live with her daughter. Dame Pattie passed away on 30 August 1995.

Published resources

Sound recording
The speeches of Sir Robert Menzies. Prime Minister Menzies and Dame Pattie Menzies giving their speeches at the opening of the T.I. Power Station , Tumut Ponds of the Snowy Mountains Scheme on October 31, 1959, Menzies, Robert, Sir, 1894-1978, 1959

Resource Section
Robert Menzies/Pattie Menzies, National Archives of Australia, 2002,
http://primeministers.naa.gov.au/meetpm.asp?pmId=12&pageName=wife

Site Exhibition
Faith, Hope and Charity Australian Women and Imperial Honours: 1901-1989, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2003,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/honours/honours.html

From Lady Denman to Katy Gallagher: A Century of Women's Contributions to Canberra, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2013,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/ldkg

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book
Prime Ministers' Wives, Langmore, Diane, 1992

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection
Papers of Sir Robert Menzies, 1905-1978 [manuscript]

Papers of Phillip L. Lawrence, 1928-1971 [manuscript]

Papers of Hector Harrison, 1915-1978 [manuscript]

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection
Dame Pattie Menzies interviewed by Heather Rusden [sound recording]

State Library of New South Wales
Cutler family - papers, 1909-1995

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