

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0036

Bate, Zara Kate

(1909 - 1989)

Born 19090310, Kew Victoria Australia

Died 19890614

Occupation Businesswoman, Community worker

Summary

Zara Bate was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire for devotion to the public interest on 8 June 1968.

Details

Zara Bate the daughter of Sydney Herbert and Violet (née McDonald) was educated at both Ruyton and Toorak Colleges, Melbourne. In 1925, aged 16, she established her first dress shop in Little Collins Street, Melbourne. Bate with a friend, later opened a salon, called 'Magg', in Toorak Village, Melbourne. The business was sold in 1976. Bate won the Australian Gown of the Year award, in 1961.

From her first marriage to Colonel James Fell, Bate had three sons. She married her second husband Harold Holt, who was to become the 22nd prime minister of Australia, in 1946. After his disappearance in 1967, from a Portsea surf beach in Victoria he was presumed drowned, she married H. J. P. (Jeff) Bate on 19 February 1969. Mr Bate, a former Liberal politician and farmer, died in 1984.

In 1968 Dame Zara wrote a book titled *My Life and Harry: An autobiography*. Besides her charity work she enjoyed reading, walking, swimming and fishing. Dame Zara Bate passed away on 14 June 1989.

Published resources

Newspaper Article

Women Federation, James, Caron, 2000

Book

Prime Ministers' Wives, Langmore, Diane, 1992

My life and Harry: an autobiography Dame Zara Holt, Holt, Zara, Dame, 1968

The secret year of Zara Holt, Freeman, Kimberley, 2025

Resource Section

Papers of Harry Maurice Miller (1934-), National Library of Australia,
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.ms-ms7981>

Zara Holt, National Archives of Australia,
<http://primeministers.naa.gov.au/meetpm.asp?pmId=17&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>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection

[Papers of Dame Zara Holt, 1934-1977 \(bulk 1951-1968\) \[manuscript\]](#)

[Papers of Harry M. Miller, 1958-2003 \[manuscript\]](#)

National Archives of Australia, National Office, Canberra

[Personal papers of Dame Zara Holt](#)

[Personal papers of Dame Zara Holt](#)

[Audio-visual material relating to Harold Edward Holt and Mrs Zara Holt](#)

[Audio-visual material relating to Harold Edward Holt and Mrs Zara Holt](#)

National Library of Australia

[\[Biographical cuttings on Zara Holt, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals\]](#)

[\[Biographical cuttings on Dame Zara Bate, socialite and author, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals\]](#)

Author Details

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