Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0037

Kramer, Leonie Judith

(1924 - 2016)

Born	19241001, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Died	20160420, Sydney New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Academic, Educator, Professor

Summary

Leonie Kramer was notable as an academic and public figure, particularly as Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation from 1982-1983 and professor of Australian literature at Sydney University from 1968, and later chancellor from 1991-2001. She supported conservative educational values in the face of progressive approaches and campaigned against the adoption of a republican form of government in Australia. She was appointed as Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire on 31 December 1982 for services to literature and the public.

Details

Daughter of Alfred and Gertrude Gibson.

Leonie Kamer was educated at the Presbyterian Ladies' College, Melbourne, the University of Melbourne, where she gained a Bachelor of Arts in 1945, and Oxford University, where she gained a Doctor of Philosophy in 1953. During her postgraduate years at Oxford she tutored at St Hughes College. She married Harold Kramer in 1952, and produced two daughters.

Her academic career blossomed with her appointment as lecturer in English in 1958, then later senior lecturer and associate professor in English at the University of New South Wales. She remained there until 1968 when she was appointed professor of Australian Literature at the University of Sydney. She was visiting professor at Harvard University's Chair of Australian Literature Studies from 1981-82.

The work of Henry Handel Richardson has been the major focus of her critical writing and she edited the *Oxford History of Australian Literature*1981, which argues the case for Australian literature as a branch of European literature. She also edited a number of publications on Australian Literature. Her list of publications is included in the Published Resources section.

She enhanced her public profile when she accepted the position of Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation from 1982-83, having served as a member of the ABC board from 1977.She served on a number of other boards and committees which included the Secondary Schools Board from 1976-82, the Council of the National Library from 1975-81, the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters from 1977-81, fellow of the Senate of the University of Sydney from 1969-74 and member of the Universities Council from 1977-86. Other appointments include serving on the boards of the ANZ bank and Western Mining Corporation, senior fellow of the Institute of Public Affairs and commissioner of the NSW Electricity Commission.

In 1986 she received the inaugural Britannica Award for the 'dissemination of learning for the benefit of mankind'. Other awards include an honorary DLitt from the University of Tasmania, an honorary LLD from both the University of Melbourne and the Australian National University. She was appointed OBE in 1976 and DBE in 1983.

Her association with the University of Sydney continued with her appointment in 1989 as Deputy Chancellor and then in 1991 Chancellor, a position she held until 2001, when she resigned in controversial circumstances.

She upheld traditional educational values, and was a prominent member of the organisation called 'Australians for a constitutional monarchy' which was established in 1992 in response to growing republican sentiment and actively campaigned against a republican system of government for Australia when a referendum was held on the question in 1999.

She died at Elizabeth Bay on 20 April 2106.

Sources: 'Kramer, Leonie Judith', *The Oxford Companion to Australian History,* OUP, Melbourne, 2000; 'Kramer, Dame Leonie Judith (1924-'; *The Australian Encyclopaedia*, vol. 5, 6th ed., 1996; 'Kramer, Dame Leonie Judith', *Who's who in Australia 2002*.

Published resources

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Edited Book
Who's Who of Australian Women, Lofthouse, Andrea, 1982

The Oxford anthology of Australian literature, Kramer, Leonie and Mitchell, Adrian, 1985

The Oxford history of Australian literature, Kramer, Leonie, 1981

James McAuley: poetry, essays and personal commentary, Kramer, Leonie, 1988

Book Section
Kramer, Dame Leonie Judith (1924-), 1996

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Women Research Leaders in the Australian Learned Academies, 1954 to 1976, Grimshaw, Patricia and Francis, Rosemary, 2012,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/sti/pdfs/16_GrimshawFrancis.pdf

Book
A. D. Hope, Kramer, Leonie, 1979

A companion to Australia Felix, Kramer, Leonie, 1962

Henry Handel Richardson, Kramer, Leonie, 1967

Myself when Laura; Fact and fiction in Henry Handel Richardson's school career, Kramer, Leonie, 1966

Henry Kendall, Kramer, Leonie, 1973

Language and literature: a synthesis, Kramer, Leonie, 1976

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

Newspaper Article
Obituary: Dame Leonie Kramer a celebrated academic and a potent conservative voice, Cunningham, James and Murphy, Damien, 2016,
http://www.smh.com.au/comment/obituaries/obituary-dame-leonie-kramer-a-celebrated-academic-and-a-potent-conservative-voi

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection
Papers of Craig McGregor, 1961-2005 [manuscript]

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