

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0047

Rankin, Annabelle Jane Mary

(1908 - 1986)

Born 19080728, Brisbane Queensland Australia

Died 19860830, Brisbane Queensland Australia

Occupation Parliamentarian

Summary

Annabelle Rankin was appointed to the Order of the British Empire – Dames Commander on 13 June 1957 for political and public services. Rankin was the first Queensland woman to be elected a member of Federal Parliament when she became a Queensland Liberal Party Senator in July 1947. She held office for thirty-four years, during which time she served as Minister for Housing from January 1966 to March 1971.

Details

The Federal electoral division of Rankin (created 1984), was named after the first Queensland woman elected to the Senate. Annabelle Rankin was one of three Queensland Liberal-Country Party candidates, elected to the Senate in 1946.

Rankin, who grew up in a political household (her father Colin Dunlop Wilson was a Member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly), became known throughout Queensland from her association with church activities, girl guides, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the Red Cross. She was also a member of the Country Women's Association, the Victoria League and the Royal Empire Society.

Rankin became the first woman party whip (opposition), when she took up her seat in the Senate in July 1947, a position she held until the next election. Then in 1952 (until 1966), she became Government whip. On Australia Day 1966, the then prime minister, Harold Holt, appointed Rankin Minister for Housing, making her the first woman to be appointed to federal ministerial position involving administration of a department.

After leaving politics Rankin became High Commissioner to New Zealand in 1971. She was the first woman to be appointed Head of Mission, and remained in this diplomatic post until 1974. Having never married Dame Rankin retired to Queensland, where she passed away on 30 August 1986.

Published resources

Edited Book

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

200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology, Radi, Heather, 1988,

<https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20071105022623/http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/78644/20071105-1315/www.200australianwo>

Monash Biographical Dictionary of 20th Century Australia, Arnold, John and Morris, Deirdre, 1994

Resource Section

List of Electoral Divisions Named After Women, Australian Electoral Commission,

<https://www.aec.gov.au/redistributions/division-names/women.html>

Rankin, Dame Annabelle (Jane Mary) 1908 -- 1986, Biography.com,

http://search.biography.com/print_record.pl?id=10560

Rankin, Dame, Annabelle (1908 - 1986),

<http://w1.xrefer.com/entry/360559>

Book

A woman of distinction : the honourable Dame Annabelle Rankin D.B.E., Browne, Waveney, 1981

Liberal women : Federation to 1949, Fitzherbert, Margaret, 2004

So Many Firsts: Liberal Women from Enid Lyons to the Turnbull Era, Fitzherbert, Margaret, 2009

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

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>

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders>

Archival resources

National Archives of Australia, National Office, Canberra

[Papers of the Hon Dame Annabelle Jane Mary RANKIN DBE](#)

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection

[Annabelle Rankin interviewed by Pat Shaw in the Parliament's Bicentenary oral history project \[sound recording\]](#)

National Library of Australia

[\[Biographical cuttings on Annabelle Rankin, first woman in Australia to hold a Federal Ministry, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals\]](#)

Author Details

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