Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0062

Zelling, Sesca Ross

(1918 - 2001)

Born	19180418, Wayville South Australia Australia
Died	20011121, Glenelg South Australia Australia
Occupation	Lawyer

Summary

Sesca Zelling was awarded the Order of the British Empire in 1960 in recognition of her service to women and the community of South Australia.

Details

Daughter of: Donald Robert Ross and Sesca Lewin (née Somerville) Anderson.

The eldest of six children, Sesca Zelling attended Methodist Ladies College (now Annesley College) for six years. During her time at the college she was awarded the Old Scholars' Prize for qualities of leadership and contribution to the life of the school; topped the State in Leaving Botany 1934; appointed Prefect 1935; captain of B tennis team 1935; co-dux 1935; Head Prefect 1936; captain of A netball team 1936 and member of A tennis team in 1936.

In 1941 she obtained her LLB from University of Adelaide and Trevor Griffin MLC in his obituary (Adelaide Advertiser 29 Dec. 2001) writes "After her admission to legal practice in 1941, she retained her interest in university affairs, particularly those that related to young women – she was president of the Australian Federation of University Women, a member of the Council of St Ann's College and was the third woman to be appointed to the Council of the University of Adelaide. She was also involved in an official capacity with the Marriage Guidance Council and the YWCA."

From 1942 until 1947 she was a prosecuting officer for the Deputy Commonwealth Crown Solicitor and was appointed a justice of the peace in 1945. At the time of her death she was the longest-serving woman member of the Royal Association of Justices.

In 1950 she married fellow lawyer Howard Edgar Zelling and they shared the same offices until 1969 when her husband became a judge of the SA Supreme Court.

A member of the National Council of Women of SA (NCW), Sesca Zelling was president from 1957 until 1960. She had previously (1954-1957) been vice-president of the NCW of Australia and was a trustee of the NCW War Memorial Fund 1954-1976. In 1970 she was appointed honorary life president of the SA division in recognition for her work with the National Council of Women.

At the time of her death she was Chair (1995-2001) of The Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden, having been a trustee since 1962.

(Source: National Council of Women SA)

Events

1954 - 1957
Australian vice-president National Council of Women

1960 - 1963
Board member YWCA

1995 - 2001
Chair The Pioneer Women’s Memorial Garden

1946 - 1957
Convener of National Council of Women Standing committee for laws and suffrage

1953 - 1956
Council member Law Society of SA

1957 - 1957
Government appointee Women’s Reception during visit to South Australia by Queen Mother

1970 - 2001
Life vice-president of National Council of Women SA

1942 - 2001
Member Lyceum Club

1971 - 2001
Member Queen Adelaide Club

1961 - 1962
President Liberal Women’s Educational Association

1945 - 1949
President MLC Old Scholars’ Association

1957 - 1960
President, National Council of Women (SA)

1949 - 1951
President, Women Graduates Association, University of Adelaide

1942 - 1947
Prosecuting officer, Deputy Commonwealth Crown Solicitor

1947 - 1950
Secretary Law Society of SA

1954 - 1976
Trustee National Council of Women War Memorial Fund

1962 - 2001
Trustee The Pioneer Women’s Memorial Garden

1957 - 1960
Vice-president Marriage Guidance Council (SA)

Published resources

Book
Greater than their knowing: a glimpse of South Australian women 1836-1986, National Council of Women of South Australia, 1986

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

Who's Who in Australia 1962, Alexander, Joseph A, 1962

Newspaper Article
Law and society before self, Griffin, Trevor, 2001

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

Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens, Trailblazing Women Lawyers Project Team, 2016,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/lawyers

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

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