Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0070

Cawley, Evonne Fay Goolagong

(1951 -)

Born	19510731, Griffith New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Tennis player

Summary

Evonne Cawley, a member of the Wiradjuri people, was the first indigenous Australian to win a Wimbledon Tennis Championship in 1971. She left her hometown in Barellan, New South Wales, to live in Sydney to concentrate on her tennis, under the management of Mr Vic Edwards, a well known Sydney tennis coach. She had a successful professional tennis career, lived in the United States of America for a period, then returned to live in Queensland after the death of her mother in 1991. She was appointed Member of the Order of the British Empire in 1972 for services to tennis and Officer of the Order of Australia in 1982.

Details

Evonne Cawley was the daughter of Kenny Goolagong, a shearer, and his wife Linda, née Hamilton. She grew up in Barellan, country New South Wales, one of a family of eight children, and was educated at Barellan primary and central schools. She was a good athlete and showed an early aptitude for tennis, which members of her family and friends encouraged. She was given special dispensation because of her age to join the local tennis club at the age of seven. She attracted the interest of Mr Vic Edwards, the owner of the Victor A Edwards Tennis School (VAETS) at the age of eleven, when a tennis clinic was held in Barellan in 1961.

On the suggestion of Edwards, she moved to Sydney permanently in 1965, at the age of fourteen, to concentrate on her tennis career and lived with the Edwards family. Edwards coached her and later became her personal manager. She attended Willoughby Girls High School and completed her School Certificate in 1968, then undertook secretarial studies at the Metropolitan Business College. She entered the New South Wales Championship at the age of fifteen and in January 1968 played in the Australian women’s singles championship. At this point she was ranked as the top junior in New South Wales.

In 1970 she travelled to London to compete at Wimbledon for the first time and was a member of the Australian Federation Cup team in the same year. The year 1971 was a highlight of her career, as she won the French Open, the British Hard Court Championships and Wimbledon. In 1972 she was appointed Member of the British Empire (MBE) for services to tennis, and received her award at Buckingham Palace. She married Roger Cawley on 19 June 1975, in London, and followed it up with a blessing at St Clements Anglican Church and open-house party in her home town of Barellan later in the year. On her marriage, she severed her business relationship with Vic Edwards and settled in the United States of America. Her first child, Kelly, was born on 12 May 1977 at Beaufort, USA and her second, Morgan, on 28 May 1981 in the same hospital. She won her second Wimbledon title in 1980. She also played with the Pittsburgh Triangles until 1976. She received her second honour, the Order of Australia, in 1982. After nursing injuries for a period, she retired from competition in 1983. In 1988 she was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame at Newport, Rhode Island, USA.

She returned to Australia to live in 1991 at Noosa Heads on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland and has travelled around Australia, coming to understand the importance of her Aboriginal heritage and introducing her American born children to their indigenous culture. She was a member of the Board of the Australian Sports Commission from 1995-1997. Since 1997, she has held the position of Sports Ambassador to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Communities.

Events

2001 - 2001
Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

Published resources

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Great Australian Women in Sport, Brasch, Nicolas, 1997

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Cawley, Evonne Fay; AO 1982, MBE 1972; Sports Ambassador to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Communities., 2002

Goolagong Cawley, Evonne (1951-), 2000

Aboriginal women, Richards, Michaela, 1988

Resource Section
EVONNE GOOLAGONG CAWLEY, 2002

Edited Book
The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia : Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, society and culture, Horton, David, 1994

Journal Article
Evonne and her family, 1977

Site Exhibition
She's Game: Women Making Australian Sporting History, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2007, http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/sg/sport-home.html

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Created 31 July 2002
Last modified 6 February 2018