

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0074

Miller, Mabel Flora

(1906 - 1978)

Born 30 November, 1906, Broken Hill New South Wales Australia

Died 30 December, 1978, New Town Tasmania Australia

Occupation Barrister, Lawyer, Politician

Summary

Mabel Miller, who served in the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) during World War II, was an active public figure in Hobart for twenty years. She was the first woman to be elected to the Hobart City Council in 1952 and later, in 1955, one of the first two women to be elected to the Tasmanian House of Assembly as the Liberal member for Franklin. She was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire for distinguished public service on January 1st, 1967.

Details

Daughter of Joseph Christian Goodhart, draper, and Alice Mary, née Humphries.

Mabel Miller, although born in Broken Hill, came to Adelaide as a child, and was educated at Girton House Girls' Grammar School. She later attended a finishing school in Paris, then proceeded to the University of Adelaide where she gained a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) in 1927 and was admitted to the bar on 17 December 1927. She practised in Sydney and London before marrying Alan John Richmond Miller, a chemist, in Hobart on 24 July 1930. She had a daughter.

During World War II, from 1941, she served in the WAAAF as acting section officer and reached the rank of temporary squadron officer while serving in Melbourne from 1942-1943 as deputy director of the WAAAF. She was later posted to Townsville, Queensland as staff officer, north eastern area. She completed her war service on 3 October 1944.

After World War II, Miller was active in the Red Cross Society, the Queen Alexandra Hospital and the Mary Ogilvy Homes Society. Her decision to stand for election to the Hobart City Council was prompted by complaints she heard about municipal mismanagement when she was president of the National Council of Women of Tasmania from 1952-1954.

Miller served on the Council from 1952, chaired the finance, health, building and town planning committees, and became deputy lord mayor in 1954-1956 and 1964-1970. She stood for election as mayor in 1970, but was unsuccessful and retired from the council in 1972.

Miller was also a member of the Tasmanian State Parliament in the House of Assembly as member for Franklin from 1955 until 1964. She strongly supported proper planning measures for public housing estates, law, education, health and welfare reforms, particularly to ensure the care and protection of children.

She was elected vice president of the Liberal Party in 1961, but her state political career ceased on her defeat in 1964.

Miller was known for her stylish clothes and charming personality, and continued to be involved with the United Ex-Service Women's Homes Association and the Tasmanian Right to Life Association. She assisted in the establishment of the Women's and Children's Memorial Rest Centre, Hobart and sat on the interim council of the Australian National Gallery and the Metric Conversion Board.

In 1967, in addition to being appointed DBE, she was the Australian representative on the United Nations' Status of Women Commission, and an Australian delegate to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

She died on 30 December 1978 in Newtown, Tasmania.

Published resources

Edited Book

Who's Who in Australia 1968, Legge, J S, 1968

Resource Section

Miller, Dame Mabel Flora (1906-1978), Petrow, Stefan, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A150430b.htm>

MILLER, MABEL FLORA, Department of Veterans' Affairs, 2002,
<http://www.wv2roll.gov.au/script/veteran.asp?ServiceID=R&VeteranID=1070028>

Book Section

Miller, Dame Mabel Flora, DBE, 1968

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>

Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens, Trailblazing Women Lawyers Project Team, 2016,

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

Archival resources

Archives Office of Tasmania

[Dame Mabel Miller](#)

Author Details

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