

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0122

Cuthbert, Betty

(1938 - 2017)

Born	19380420, Merrylands New South Wales Australia
Died	20170807, Western Australia Australia
Occupation	Commonwealth or Empire Games Gold Medalist, Olympian, Track and Field Athlete

Summary

Betty Cuthbert was the first Australian athlete to win an Olympic gold medal on Australian soil. Nicknamed the ‘Golden Girl’ of Australian athletics, she was inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame in 1985 as an Athlete Member for her contribution to the sport of athletic. She was elevated to “Legend of Australian Sport” in 1994.

Betty Cuthbert was so unsure that she would make the Australian Olympic Games team in 1956, she bought tickets to attend the Games as a spectator.

Details

In 1956, at the Olympic Games in Melbourne, Betty Cuthbert became the first Australian athlete to win a gold medal on Australian soil. In fact, Cuthbert won gold in three track and field events at these Olympics: the 100 metres, 200 metres and the 4x100 metre relay. She made a winning return to form at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, taking gold in the 400 metres. She has achieved 16 world records. In the 1970s, Cuthbert was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and began actively campaigning for research funds for the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Her autobiography, *Golden Girl*, has been printed in two editions.

In 1965, Cuthbert was appointed as a Member of the Order of the British Empire, for athletics in New South Wales. She was later appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (1 January 1984), and awarded the Australian Sports Medal (8 February 2000).

Betty Cuthbert died on 7 August 2017. At her death, she was still the only Olympian to have won gold in the 100m, 200m and 400m and only Ian Thorpe (five) has won more gold for Australia.

Events

- 1956 - 1956**
Athletics – 100m Sprint, 200m Sprint, 4 x 100m Relay
- 1962 - 1962**
Athletics – 4 x 110y Relay
- 1964 - 1964**
Athletics – 400m Event
- 2001 - 2001**
Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women
- 1960 - 1960**
Participated at the Rome Olympics

Published resources

Book

100 great Australians, Macklin, Robert, 1983

Golden girl, Webster, Jim and Cuthbert, Betty, 1966

Golden girl : an autobiography, Cuthbert, Betty, 2000

Great Australian Women in Sport, Brasch, Nicolas, 1997

Australia at the Olympics, Andrews, Malcolm, 2000

Newspaper Article

Australia's golden girl delighted to get a bronze, Dubecki, Larissa, 2003

Bronze tribute, golden spirit, Reed, Ron, 2003

Golden turns bronzed, Giles, Tanya, 2003

Resource

Australia at the Games, Australian Olympic Committee, 2006,
<http://corporate.olympics.com.au/index.cfm?p=25>

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

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>

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>

Author Details

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