Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0166

Spencer, Ida May

(1900 - 1982)

Born	19000102, Freemantle Western Australia Australia
Died	19820414
Occupation	Community worker

Summary

On 10 June 1961, Ida Spencer was appointed a Member to the Order of the British Empire for services to the Country Women’s Association in Western Australia.

Details

The sixth child of James and Phoebe (née Hymus) Christie, Ida Spencer grew up in Fremantle and Perth and was a youth leader with the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). After completing a business college course she at first worked in a solicitor’s office. Later she worked with the state office of the Returned Services League (RSL) before spending five years as business secretary for the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) from 1936.

She joined the Darkan Country Women’s Association (CWA) following her marriage to a sheep farmer, John Spencer. Drawing upon her musical background – she had previously sung in church choirs, eisteddfods, hospitals, elderly persons homes and charity concerts – Ida Spencer organised the Darkan branch choir competition in 1951. The competition was to later develop into an annual Choral Festival. Ida Spencer became the Western Australian state president of the CWA in 1955. During her reign she established the Western Australian CWA branches of the air enabling women in isolated area to attend meetings, without leaving their homes, by using a pedal-radio link-up.

Spencer became national president of the CWA in 1957, a position she held until 1959. In 1958 she was awarded honorary life membership of the CWA. On 10 June 1961, Ida Spencer was appointed a Member to the Order of the British Empire for services to the Country Women’s Association in Western Australia.

Dedicated to the community Ida Spencer organised Darkan’s first Anzac Day Service with the RSL. She was awarded the thirty years’ service medal from the Red Cross and supported junior farmer organisations. She helped established Darkan’s kindergarten and assisted in welfare work with deserted wives. Spencer also was a member of the Good Neighbour Council, the Royal Historical Society of WA and Collie Repertory Club.

Published resources

Sound recording
[Interview with Ida Spencer], Spencer, Ida, 1977

Book
The Many Hats of Country Women: The Jubilee History of the Country Women's Association of Australia, Stevens-Chambers, Brenda, 1997

Darkan's early days : one hundred years of Darkan's history, 1862-1962, Spencer, Ida 1900-, 1966

Reflections : profiles of 150 women who helped make Western Australia's history; Project of the Womens Committee for the 150th Anniversary Celebrations of Western Australia, Popham, Daphne; Stokes, K.A.; Lewis, Julie, 1979

Journal Article
[Ida Spencer awarded MBE; past state president of CWA], 1941

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

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection
Dame Raigh Roe interviewed by Gail O'Hanlon in the Australians of the year oral history project [sound recording]

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection
Records of the Country Women's Association of Australia, 1945-1969, 2003 [manuscript]

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