Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0186

de la Hunty, Shirley Barbara

(1925 - 2004)

Born	19250718, Guildford Western Australia Australia
Died	20040217, Western Australia Australia
Occupation	Athletics coach, Commonwealth or Empire Games Gold Medalist, Lecturer, Olympian, Teacher, Track and Field A

Summary

Champion sprinter and hurdler, Shirley Strickland (as she was then known), became the first Australian female to win an Olympic medal in a track and field event at the London Olympic Games in 1948.

Shirley de la Hunty was appointed Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) on 26 January 2001 for service to the community, particularly in the areas of conservation, the environment and local government, and to athletics as an athlete, coach and administrator. She had been appointed a member of the Order of the British Empire (Civil) (MBE) for services to athletics on 1 January 1957.

Details

Shirley Strickland studied nuclear physics, completed an honours degree and became a science teacher. In 1948 she won the Australian sprint and hurdles titles. Later that year she represented Australia at the London Olympic Games and became the first Australian female athlete to win a track and field medal. The champion sprinter and hurdler took part in three Olympic Games (1948, 1952 and 1956) and was the winner of three gold, one silver and three bronze medals. She also set world records and won three gold medals and two silver medals at Empire (later Commonwealth) Games.

In 1950 Shirley Strickland married Lawrence Edmund de la Hunty and they had four children. In 1960 she was selected for the Rome Olympics but did not compete due to her third pregnancy.

After retiring as a competitor Shirley de la Hunty continued teaching at various Perth high schools and later became a university lecturer. She maintained her interest in sport by coaching athletes including Raelene Boyle, and was involved in athletics administration as manageress of the Australian women's team at the Mexico (1968) and Montreal (1976) Olympics.

Besides sport Shirley de la Hunty is interested in nature and conservation issues. She has featured on 'This is Your Life' and 'Australian Story'. A recipient of the Helm award (now World Trophy) and the Queen's medal, in 1995 she was elected to the Australian Sports Hall of Fame.

A Fellow of Edith Cowan University, Shirley de la Hunty won the Advance Australia Award in 1987. At the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games Opening Ceremony Shirley de la Hunty was an Olympic Torchbearer along with Raelene Boyle, Betty Cuthbert, Dawn Fraser and Cathy Freeman.

1948 National Championships
80 metre hurdles

1948 London Olympic Games
4 x 100 metre relay – silver medal
100 metre sprint – bronze medal
80 metre hurdles – bronze medal

1950 National Championships
80 metre hurdles
440 yards sprint

1950 Auckland Empire Games
80 metre hurdles – gold medal
4 x 440 yards relay – gold medal
4 x 660 yards relay – gold medal
100 yards sprint – silver medal

1952 National Championships
80 metre hurdles
440 yards sprint

1952 Helsinki Olympic Games
80 metre hurdles – gold medal
100 metre sprint – bronze medal

1955 World University Games
100 metre sprint – gold medal
80 metres hurdles – gold medal
200 metre sprint – bronze medal

1956 National Championships
440 yards sprint

1956 Melbourne Olympic Games
80 metre hurdles – gold medal
4 x 100 metre relay – gold medal

1960 National Championships
4 x 110 yards relay

1962 National Championships
4 x 110 yards relay

Events

1952 - 1952
Athletics – 100m sprint

1948 - 1948
Athletics – 4 x 100m relay

1952 - 1952
Athletics – 80m Hurdles

1948 - 1948
Athletics – 80m Hurdles and 100m sprint

1956 - 1956
Athletics – 80m Hurdles and 4 x 100m Relay

1950 - 1950
Athletics – 80m Hurdles; 440y Medley Relay; 660y Medley Relay

2001 - 2001
Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

Published resources

Book
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

Outstanding Women in Australia: Women in Sport, Rolton, Gloria, 1997

Edited Book
Who's Who in Australia 2002, Herd, Margaret, 2002

Monash Biographical Dictionary of 20th Century Australia, Arnold, John and Morris, Deirdre, 1994

Resource
Where are the Women in Australian science?, Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre, 2003, http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/wisa/wisa.html

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

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Newspaper Article
Shirley Strickland, legend of the track, dies, Dowling, Jason and Evans, Chris, 2004

Strickland the first lady of Australian aths, Johnson, Len, 2004

Champion runs her race, Oakley, Vivienne and Collier, Karen, 2004

Enigma who lit the way for others, Reed, Ron, 2004

Resource Section
Interview with Shirley Strickland de la Hunty, Hughes, Robin, 2006, http://www.australianbiography.gov.au/strickland/index.html

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

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014, http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders

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