Entry type: Person
Entry ID: PR00345

Miller, Olga Eunice

(1920 - 2003)

Born	19200327, Maryborough Queensland Australia
Died	20030801, Maryborough Queensland Australia
Occupation	Community worker, Environmentalist, Illustrator, Storyteller, Writer

Summary

Olga Miller was a direct descendant and Elder of the Butchulla people of Fraser Island. She was an Aboriginal historian who wrote about and taught Aboriginal culture for over 40 years.

The entry was written in consultation with family members.

Details

Olga was the youngest of seven children. Her father was a full blood Aborigine of the Butchulla people of Fraser Island and her grandfather, Willie Wondunna, was head of the Butchulla people. She spent her early life on Fraser Island but the family eventually moved to Maryborough for their children's education.

The Legends of Moonie Jarl (1964) was written by Olga's brother, Wilfred Reeves, while Olga was responsible for the illustrations in the book. Olga's other works include , *Fraser Island Legends* (1993), *How the Water Got to the Plains* (1997), *Strings and Things from Long Ago* and *The Legend of Mount Bauple* (2000). She published articles for school text books, wrote stories for animated films (*Tree Duck, Butterfly, How the Water Got to the Plains, Why the Kookaburra Laughs*) and wrote newspaper columns for the Maryborough Chronicle. Her work also included the Wide Bay Television presentations *Legends of Our Land* and *Spotlight* and presentations on Radio Maryborough (*Legends of Our Land* and *This was our Town*).

"Aunty" Olga effectively established herself as a one woman lobby group for the well-being of Fraser Island. Politicians, developers, tourism operators and the National Parks and Wildlife Service all consulted her before doing anything which affected the Island's environment. She sat on boards and committees and kept a sharp eye on everything that happened there. She interpreted her protective role not in terms of possession but as a duty of care, a promise she had to keep to her grandfather and her people.

Olga's chief concern was to establish more protection for Fraser Island by enforcing the rules about access to vulnerable or forbidden places, speed limits and environmental damage. She saw the need to preserve the middens and other significant relics from the destructive consequences of mass tourism. Her wish and her challenge were to share the extraordinary beauty of the island with the world without changing its fragile face.

The University of Southern Queensland (Fraser Coast Campus) established the Olga Miller Memorial book bursary in memory of Auntie Olga Miller. At least three bursaries are awarded annually and are available to Indigenous undergraduate students from the Fraser Coast Campus. Two bursaries are awarded to undergraduate students and one bursary is awarded to a Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP) or Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program (IHEPP) student. At the end of 2008, the Olga Miller memorial garden was developed in the immediate surrounds of the newly constructed C block, at the Fraser Coast campus of the University of Southern Queensland.

The entry was written in consultation with family members.

Published resources

Newsletter
Author elder awarded honorary degree, Snow-McLean, Gus, 2003, http://www.usq.edu.au/resources/04jun.pdf

Leaflet
Recognition for Maryborough's Achievers, Maryborough City Council, 2000

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

National Archives of Australia, National Office, Canberra
[Descendants of the Butchulla tribe (Mrs Olga Miller)]

Olga Miller

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