Entry type: Person
Entry ID: PR00367

Elliott, Lyla Daphne

(1934 - 2017)

Born	19340702, Geraldton Western Australia Australia
Died	20170218, Perth Western Australia Australia
Occupation	Parliamentarian

Summary

Lyla Daphne Elliott joined the Australian Labor Party in 1955, and was a member of the Legislative Council in Western Australia from 1971 until 1986.

Details

Lyla Daphne Elliott was born in Geraldton, Western Australia, in 1934. She was educated at Reedy and Waroona State schools, and completed her Junior Certificate at St Joseph's Convent, Waroona. Her father, Albert Elliott, worked as a brewer, tool sharpener and fitter and turner. Lyla described her background as 'working class,' and her parents as 'decent living people who struggled all their lives…although not to the point of poverty.' In May 1976, Lyla married Edwin John (Jack) White, at Caversham, WA.

Elliott joined the Australian Labor Party in 1955, and was secretary to the General Secretary of the State Executive of the Australian Labor Party (ALP), F.E. (Joe) Chamberlain, for almost twenty years. She was first elected to the Legislative Council (LC) for the North-East Metropolitan Province, succeeding Ruby Hutchison (the first woman elected to the LC) when she retired in 1971. During her fifteen years in the LC, Elliott consistently raised matters of community concern, particularly those involving injustice. In her inaugural speech Elliott drew urgent attention to the plight of Australia's indigenous population, and continued to throughout her career to give special emphasis to issues directly affecting women, including equal opportunity, abortion legislation, and family planning. Elliott also chaired a task force for the Burke Government on domestic violence, and worked to address other concerns including child welfare, housing, care of the aged and mental health patients, the treatment of disabled people, animal welfare and nuclear disarmament.

Lyla Elliott was the first woman to hold the post of Chairperson of the State Parliamentary Labor Party, from 1978 to 1986. She served extensively in the Labor Party policy committees, including ten years as convenor of the ALP Health and Social Welfare Committee. Earlier, from 1974 to 1976, she was the first woman to be Deputy Chairman of Committees, a position she again occupied from 1983 until her retirement from Parliament in 1986, after which she spent time studying History at Edith Cowan University.

Published resources

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book
We Hold Up Half the Sky: The Voices of Western Australian ALP Women in Parliament, Watson, Judyth [ed.], 1994

Edited Book
Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia, Vol. 2, 1930-1990, Black, David and Bolton, Geoffrey, 1990

Book Section
Making a Difference: Women in the West Australian Parliament 1921-1999, Black, David and Phillips, Harry, 2000

Site Exhibition
The Women's Pages: Australian Women and Journalism since 1850, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2008, http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/cal/cal-home.html

Archival resources

State Library of Western Australia
[Interview with Lyla Elliott] [sound recording] / [interviewed by R. Jamieson]

[Harold Peden Memorial Lecture by Lyla Elliott; Book launch of Blacklegs by Bill Latter] [sound recording]

Lyla Elliott papers, 1962-1985 [manuscript]

Author Details
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