Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0011

Owen, Mary

(1921 - 2017)

Born	19210208, Balwyn Victoria Australia
Died	20170323, Victoria Australia
Occupation	Trade unionist, Women's liberationist

Summary

Mary Owen was founding Coordinator of The Working Women's Centre Melbourne, 1975-1986, when it was absorbed into the Australian Council of Trade Unions. She was a staff member of AAESDA (Association of Architects, Engineers, Surveyors & Draughtsmen of Australia), 1965 -1975 and a member of La Trobe University Council 1983-1990. She was appointed Deputy Chancellor of La Trobe University 1989. A founding member of Emily's List, Mary Owen was also a Member of the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) for over forty-three years. She represented WEL on many Government committees, making a significant impact on policies advancing the status of women, especially the fight for equal pay.

In 1986 the first Mary Owen Dinner was organised in Melbourne to celebrate Mary's retirement. Held annually, the event lasted twenty years. There was always a female keynote speaker and the audience, normally in the order of 600 women, wearing the feminist colours of purple, green and white, was a sight to behold. The last dinner was held in 2005.

Mary Owen was a very early supporter of the Australian Women's Archives Project, which began as a community based organisation's response to a request from Mary Owen for help with conserving the records of her long and varied contribution to public life.

Born in 1921, Mary was a woman who effected change – and made Australia a better, more equal place for all of us coming after her. She died 23 March, 2017.

Events

2001 - 2001
Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

Published resources

Book
Getting Equal: the History of Australian Feminism, Lake, Marilyn, 1999

Edited Book
Women We Know, Harper, Jan and Lee, Jenny, 1988

A decade of Mary Owen dinners, Waterfield, Dorothy, 1995

Working Women: Discussion papers from the Working Women's Centre, Melbourne, Owen, Mary and Shaw, Sylvie, 1979

Living generously: women mentoring women, Scutt, Jocelynne A., 1996

Article
Vale Mary Owen OAM, 2017,
http://www.nfaw.org/farewell-mary-owen-feisty-strong-feminist/

Book Section
The Political Participation of Women, Owen, Mary, 1980

Women's Rights in the Workplace: What's being done to improve them?, Owen, Mary, 1983

Conference Paper
Stress in the Workplace, Owen, Mary, 1982

Journal Article
Edna Minna Ryan, Owen, Mary, 1997

Why have a Working Women's Centre?, Owen, Mary, 1979

I confess I'd rather work for a few reforms, Owen, Mary, 1977

Discrimination - what does it mean?, Owen, Mary, 1978

What Choice for Women?, Owen, Mary, 1979

What came out of Copenhagen? The definition and relevance of education for women in developing countries, Owen, Mary, 1980

The Working Women's Centre, Owen, Mary, 1981

Making Affirmative Action Work, Owen, Mary, 1984

Women: a wastefully exploited resource, Owen, Mary, 1984,
https://trove.nla.gov.au/version/52021989

Resource
100 Years of Women's Suffrage 1908-2008: Reflection and Celebration, RMIT University Students from School of Architecture and Design and School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning, 2007

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

The University of Melbourne Archives
Mary Owen Dinner 1986

Women's Electoral Lobby

Owen, Mary

Working Women's Centre Papers

State Library of Victoria
Papers of Mary Owen, 1951-2017, [manuscript].

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection
Papers of Edna Ryan, 1948-1993 [manuscript]

National Library of Australia
[Biographical cuttings on Mary Owen, co-ordinator of the Working Women's Centre, Melbourne, 1981, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

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Digital resources



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