Entry type: Person
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Christesen, Nina Mikhailovna

(1911 - 2001)

Born	19111223, Blagoveshchensk Manchuria Russia
Died	20010808, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Occupation	Lecturer

Summary

Nina Mikhailovna Christesen AM (née Maximoff) pioneered the study of Russian in Australia and founded the Department of Russian Language and Literature at the University of Melbourne in 1946. She remained at the head of the department until her retirement in 1977.

In the 1987 Australia Day Honours Christesen was made a Member of the Order of Australia “in recognition of service to education, particularly to the study of Slavic language and culture”.

Details

Christesen arrived in Brisbane with her parents as a migrant in 1924. She had lived in St Petersburg until 1917 and then the Russian-Manchurian city of Harbin.

She graduated from the University of Queensland, became senior mistress at St Aidan’s Girl’s School in Brisbane, and worked as a tutor at Women’s College. She met her husband to be, Clem Christesen, founder of the magazine *Meanjin*, after being recommended to him as a language teacher.

In 1945, the Christensen’s moved to Melbourne, when the University of Melbourne offered to support *Meanjin* and its editor. In 1946, encouraged by members of the University of Melbourne Arts Faculty, Christesen established the Department of Russian Language and Literature, the first such course in Australia.

In 1967 Christesen founded the journal, *Melbourne Slavonic Studies* (later *Australasian Slavonic and East European Studies*) and in the same year the Australian Slavists’ Association (which later incorporated the New Zealand contingent).

Published resources

Newspaper Article
Obituaries - Nina Mikhailovna Christesen, Armstrong, Judith, 2001

Book
The Christesen Romance, Armstrong, Judith, 1996

150 years, 150 stories: brief biographies of one hundred and fifty remarkable people associated with the University of Melbourne, Flesch, Juliet and McPhee, Peter, 2003

Edited Book
The Half-open door : sixteen modern Australian women look at professional life and achievement, Grimshaw, Patricia and Strahan, Lynne, c1982

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

The University of Melbourne Archives
Meanjin Editorial Records of C B Christesen

Christesen, Nina Mikhailovna (1911-2001)

Christesen, Nina Mikhailovna (1911-2001)

The Half Open Door

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection
Papers of Dorothy Green, 1943-1990 [manuscript]

Author Details
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