

Shirley Patricia Birch

Born 1932 Collaroy NSW
Died 14 February 2013 Adelaide SA
Education Dee Why NSW
Music Diploma
Family Youngest of 9 children
Married Stanley Stewart (d.1963)
2 Daughters 1 Son
Married Thomas (Tam) Birch 1969



Shirley's Christian faith remained strong and was evident all the way through her life journey. She acknowledged that she was in God's care and that whatever was to come would be part of his plan for her. We know that all who telephoned her always had their day brightened by her greeting of 'May God Bless You'. In community and church organisations Shirley often took leading roles as chair, administrator, speaker, writer and counsellor. She was also a lay preacher.

Inspired by her mother's piano playing, Shirley first taught herself before having lessons when she was 11 years old, and attained her music diploma at 17. She never aspired to be a concert pianist, but was in constant demand as a soloist and accompanist for everything from musicals to funerals.

Following Stan's death in a car accident Shirley and their three young children valued the support of the Woomera United Church community where they had lived since 1953. She played for church services, weddings, christenings, funerals and other events while working at the Department of Works to support her family. She volunteered as secretary of the Country Women's Association, and became lieutenant and then captain of the Girl Guides.

Shirley was President of the SA Unit of Australian Church Women for the biennium of 1987-1989. She was a devoted Convener of the Fellowship of the Least Coin for a number of years, and certainly ensured that many in the wider community learned of this worthy organisation during that time. Shirley also served as Assistant Secretary for a number of years, and those who served as Secretary were required to learn quickly that the Minutes needed to be recorded in a particular way, as well as the differences in membership classification under her leadership. Her clear understanding of this complex organisation is sadly missed.

She valued highly the friendships that she developed through the various church and community groups and through other connections, and her involvement in these activities is believed to have kept giving her purpose and a sense of being able to contribute to things that were worthwhile. Just days before her death, the SA Unit of Australian Church Women recorded the decision to award Shirley National Life Membership, and it is unfortunate that it was not possible to carry through with this intention.

South Australian State Unit Inc. ACW

Barbara Elizabeth Grealy

Born 13 May 1924

Died 14 April 2013

Education



As a member of Catholic Women's League, Barbara served as Branch President, Diocesan Treasurer, State Vice-President and State Secretary of SA Inc., and as National Secretary of Catholic Women's League Australia. When working as National International Secretary for CWLA to World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations, she attended quadrennial assemblies in Bangalore, Antagonish and London and was an Australian delegate to WUCWO's Asian-Pacific Regional Conference in Indonesia.

Around the same time, Barbara was chosen as the only woman from SA to the first Catholic National Laity Conference held in Sydney in 1976. She represented South Australia at five biennial national meetings of Diocesan Committees of Ecumenism from 1976-84.

Barbara was recognised for her services to the Christian faith by receiving a Benemerenti Medal from Pope John Paul II in 1981. Further acknowledgement of her dedication resulted in Honorary Life Member of CWL of SA Inc, and of the World Day of Prayer Committee of South Australia.

Barbara served as the Catholic representative on the Executive of the South Australian Unit, of Australian Church Women, as National Vice-President from 1985 to 1987 and as ACW's National representative to the Asian Church Women's Conference between 1986 and 1990. She was Deputy Chairman of the International Committee of the Fellowship of the Least Coin from 1986 until 1990, attending meetings in Bangkok, Singapore, Geneva, Kingston and Jakarta.

Service in the community saw Barbara serve for ten years on the executive of the National Council of Women of SA. She was NCW delegate to SA Telecom Regional Consumers Council from 1989 to 1993, and Co-chair with Telecom's SA-NT Manager from 1991 to 1993. Barbara was on the board of management of *The Southern Cross* newspaper and in the early 1990s served on a Government Review of the Equal Opportunity for Women Program. Other appointments were to the SA Women's Suffrage Centenary Committee which celebrated South Australia's leadership as the first state to give women the right to vote, and to an advisory committee for mammogram screening.

'Barbara's energy, vision and commitment to the status of women and related issues were exemplary. She was an inspiration to many.' (*The Adelaide Advertiser obituary notice*)

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