

Australian Church Women National Life Member



Deaconess Mary Maria Andrews, A.M. F.I.B.A. - 1973

Deaconess Mary Andrews represented the Anglican Church on the Interim Committee of ACW – later became a Vice President and a member of the National Committee until 1973 – when she was made a Life Member. She attended every national meeting of the National Committee since its inception.

Born: Cooma, NSW, 20th March, 1915

Education:

1933 – 34 Nursing Training.

1935 – 36 Croydon Missionary and Bible College, Diploma

1937 – 38 Anglican Deaconess House – Diploma 1st Class Hon's.

Denomination: Anglican

Appointments:

1938 – 45 Church Missionary Society China.

1945 – 46 Worked in Children's House and Home for Destitute Women and Girls - Lahore.

1947 – 51 China – teaching, pastoral work.

1952 – 75 Principal Deaconess House – Sydney.

1951 – 82 Head Deaconess - Sydney diocese.

1976 Part – time Chaplain Anglican Retirement Villages.

Membership:

1951- 82 President Deaconess Fellowship.

1978 – 82 National Liaison Officer of Women's World Day of Prayer.

1983 – 85 Secretary of NSW World Day of Prayer Committee.

1985 – 87 Vice-President of NSW World Day of Prayer committee

1973 – 87 NSW National Council of Women – 1984 Vice – President.

1957 – 87 NSW Inter-Church Council – later became NSW Unit of ACW. President 1959 – 60.

Life Member 1981.

From 1951 – 87 variously associated with many Anglican Deaconess associations, Hospital Boards and Committees.

Awards:

A member of Order of Australia. A.M for Services to Religion – 1980.

1973 Life Member of National ACW

1981 Life Member of NSW Unit of ACW

1985 Fellow of International Biographical Association.

Represented:

ACW of Australia at :

1967 1st International Interdenominational Women's Conference – Taize, France.

1971 Attended Church Women United Assembly – Wichita, Y.S.A.

1978 Represented Australia International Women's World Day of Prayer meetings – Lusaka, Zambia.

1979 Attended Church Women United Assembly, Los Angeles, USA

1982 Women's World Day of Prayer Meeting at Tutzing, Germany.

Why the ACW?

Deaconess Mary wrote:

"In my early teens, I was involved in Christian Endeavour, which brought together young people from different denominations at High School. I was Vice-President of Christian Union. I studied at Croydon Missionary and Bible College with men and women of different denominations.

In China as a missionary, I worked with Missionaries of different Churches.

On returning to Australia, I became interested in the Women's World Day of Prayer and the NSW Women's Inter-Church Council and appointed eight representatives.

There was no Federal body uniting Australian Church Women.

My prayers were answered when the Australian Council of Churches asked Mrs M. Wyllie, Mrs K. Day, Mrs M. Verco to form a Committee to bring forth a proposal re. a national body – the result of which a Conference of ladies representing different denominations and states was held at Deaconess House.

Later a Constitution of guidelines were drawn up and presented to the Annual meeting of ACC which after much debate was accepted, but some expressed hope ACW was born to die!

However, it has been a joy to see that ACW has grown and is fulfilling the original aim to unite Christian women together in their allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Vale

Deaconess Mary Andrews AM

20 – 3 – 1915 to 16 – 10 – 1996

One would need more space than available here to adequately describe the contribution made by deaconess Mary Andrews to women both in Australia and other parts of the world.

Born in Cooma in 1915, Mary's life was given to service for others when from her early teens when she began teaching Sunday School and became Youth Fellowship Leader.

Training as a nurse, a Diploma at Croydon Missionary and Bible College, and study at Anglican Deaconess House in Sydney equipped her further for future service. Here spheres of service included the following:

Two terms with the Church Missionary Society in China

A term at St Faith's Children's Home in Lahore, India, [now

Pakistan]

Principal, Anglican Deaconess Training College in Sydney

Head Deaconess in the Diocese of Sydney

Vice President, World Federation of Deaconesses

Executive Member of world Day of Prayer committee

Life Patron of International Biographical Center and IBA

Advisory Council

Active membership of NSW National Council of Women

Part time Chaplain to a number of Anglican Retirement villages

Mary was instrumental in the birth of Australian Church Women and commented in recent years "It has been a joy to see that Australian Church Women has grown and is fulfilling the original aim to unite Christian women in their allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ."

In 1973 Mary became a National Life Member of Australian Church Women and in 1981 a Life Member of the NSW Unit. From the inception of the Movement for the Ordination of Women [MOW] she had been an active member.

She represented Australia at many international gatherings and was recognized for her services and great contribution to women and religion with the award by the Queen of Member of the Order of Australia [AM] in 1980.

Mary served as an executive member on the NSW Council of the National Council of Women from 1974 to 1994 and was granted an Honorary Life Membership of that organization also.

"My Philosophy," she once stated "is rooted in the Christian faith which is the central and all-influencing power in my life. I have sought throughout my life to uphold the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ – of love to all people. As a Christian I believe I am called to serve with compassion, love, humility, patience and joy wherever in the community and world I am called to work."

After 81 years of faithful stewardship we say

“Deaconess Mary Andrews, enter into the rest of your Lord.”

Approximately six hundred people attended the Thanksgiving service for her life at St Andrew’s Cathedral, Sydney on the 23rd October 1996. The hymns sung at the service were those sung on the occasion of Mary’s ordination, and the flowers were given in recognition of the association of Mary Andrews with the William Branwhite Clarke College. A copy of the Order of Service is held by ACW Archives.

Tribute prepared by Jenny Jarvis, Winifred Kiek Scholarship National Convenor, Nov. 1996.