

= Mary Herring =

Dame Mary Ranken Herring , DBE , CStJ ( née Lyle ; 31 March 1895 ? 26 October 1981 ) was an Australian medical practitioner and community worker .

A graduate of the University of Melbourne , where she studied medicine and excelled at sports , Mary qualified as a general practitioner in 1921 and became a resident surgeon at Royal Melbourne Hospital . Her work was mainly with poor women , many of whom lived in unsanitary conditions and had inadequate diets . The social mores of the time often kept young women ignorant of matters dealing with sex and pregnancy . She recognised that pregnant women in particular needed more information about what was happening to them , and provided information on birth control at a time when many doctors and a large segment of the community were opposed to it . " She broke taboos " , Della Hilton later wrote , and " made forbidden subjects not only matters for discussion , but for action " .

In addition to her medical work , Mary supported women 's sports and was patron of many charities . During World War II she helped form the AIF Women 's Association . She served on its Welfare Subcommittee , looking after the needs of soldiers ' families , and was president of the association from 1943 to 1946 . In recognition of her medical and charitable work , she was made a Commander of the Order of St John in 1953 , and a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1960 " for services to nursing in Victoria " .

= = Early life = =

Mary Ranken Lyle was born in the Melbourne suburb of Carlton on 31 March 1895 , the eldest of four children of Sir Thomas Ranken Lyle , a mathematical physicist , and his wife , Frances Isobel Clare née Milleur . She attended Toorak College between 1906 and 1912 , where she excelled both academically and at sport , playing tennis , hockey , netball and cricket , and competing in swimming . She was head girl in 1911 and 1912 .

In 1913 she entered the University of Melbourne as a medical student . She was captain of the women 's tennis and hockey teams , obtaining University Sporting Blue in both sports . In 1918 she had met Edmund ( Ned ) Herring , then a young Australian captain in the British Army on leave from the Macedonian front of the Great War .

During her training , she worked with the district nurses , visiting families in the Melbourne 's less affluent suburbs . Her ambition was to become a doctor who improved the lives of women and children . Women of her own social class did not normally work after they married , so marriage was not something she had intended . In 1919 , with the war over , she wrote to Ned urging him to complete his Rhodes Scholarship studies before returning to Australia .

She met her future husband , Ned Herring , when he arrived back in Melbourne at last on 26 November 1920 . She graduated with her dual Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery ( MB , BS ) degree in March 1921 , achieving first @-@ class honours in all subjects , with a first in medicine and fourth in surgery . She won the Keith Levi Memorial Scholarship in medicine and the Sameson Prize in clinical medicine , and became a resident surgeon at Royal Melbourne Hospital under Sir Alan Newton .

Ned was so supportive of her career plans that Mary reconsidered marriage , although she knew both their parents would disapprove . With her studies completed , Mary and Ned became formally engaged at Easter in 1921 , and they were married on 6 April 1922 at Toorak Presbyterian Church . They had three daughters : Mary Cecile ( Molly ) in 1924 , Judith Ann ( Judy ) in 1926 , and Margaret Lyle in 1933 . Molly would later become a doctor like her mother .

= = Career = =

Richard Fetherston had established a Baby Health Center in Prahran in 1920 that provided post @-@ natal care . His experience soon showed that his workload would be greatly reduced if ante natal care were provided , with mothers being monitored throughout their pregnancies . He asked

Mary if she would be willing to establish such a clinic , which would be open one day a week .

The new clinic opened in Prahran , not far from the shopping centre in Chapel Street in 1926 . Mary had the district nurses spread word of the clinic . The clinic was the first of its kind in Melbourne , and became a model for a similar clinic established by Mary in South Melbourne in 1940 . At the time she started work at the Prahran clinic , she was a mother herself and pregnant with Judy , a circumstance of great interest to the women who sought advice or treatment at the clinic . Her work was mainly with poor women , many of whom lived in unsanitary conditions and had inadequate diets .

Mary joined the Melbourne District Nursing Society in 1931 and was its vice president from 1943 to 1953 . She banded together with George Simpson and Victor Wallace to establish the Women 's Welfare Clinic to offer advice on birth control , at a time when many doctors and a large segment of the community were opposed to it . This clinic functioned for one day a week until 1945 when it was discontinued , as the advice it offered could by then be obtained elsewhere . The social mores of the time often kept young women ignorant of matters dealing with sex and pregnancy , but she recognised that pregnant women in particular needed more information about what was happening to them . " She broke taboos " , Della Hilton later wrote , and " made forbidden subjects not only matters for discussion , but for action " .

= = Later life = =

Ned joined the Second Australian Imperial Force ( AIF ) soon after the outbreak of World War II in September 1939 , and Mary banded together with a number of soldiers ' wives to form the AIF Women 's Association in 1940 . She served on its Welfare Subcommittee , looking after the needs of soldiers ' families , and was president of the association from 1943 ? 46 .

She became Lady Herring in May 1943 when Ned was created a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire . On 2 February 1944 , the Premier of Victoria , Albert Dunstan , appointed Ned as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria . For much of the next 30 years he would also serve as lieutenant governor of Victoria , this being a common additional function of the chief justice . When Ned became acting governor for eight months in February 1949 , Mary found Government House to be in a state of disrepair . She successfully lobbied James Kennedy for funds for its refurbishment , and supervised the work personally .

A foundation member of the Toorak College council in 1927 , Mary served as its president from 1947 to 1948 and again from 1960 to 1970 . She played tennis and golf , and when her two eldest daughters began playing hockey at school , Mary 's interest in hockey was rekindled . A strong believer in the principle that women and not men should administer women 's sports , she became a member of the Victorian Women 's Amateur Sports Council , and was later the patron of the Victorian Women 's Hockey Association . Players visiting from interstate would often stay at her home . This was extended to overseas visitors during the 1956 Summer Olympics , which were held in Melbourne .

In 1953 , Mary travelled to London to attend the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II , which she viewed from a seat inside Westminster Abbey . In a ceremony at Buckingham Palace on 10 July 1953 , the new Queen made Mary a Commander of the Order of St John in recognition of her charity work . This charity work was extensive . Mary was a foundation member and first president of the Victorian Council of Social Service when it was formed in 1946 , and chairman of the Vera Scantlebury Brown Memorial Trust from 1946 to 1979 . Mary and Vera Scantlebury Brown had both attended Toorak College and were medical students at the University of Melbourne together .

She was a deputy @-@ president of the Victorian division of the Australian Red Cross from 1944 to 1963 , of the Victoria League from 1945 to 1972 , and of the Australian council of the Save the Children Fund from 1962 to 1967 . On 11 June 1960 , she was created a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire " for services to nursing in Victoria " . Mary Herring Hall at Toorak College was named in her honour in 1964 .

= = Death = =

Before her death on 26 October 1981 , aged 86 , following a long illness , Mary planned her own funeral service , requesting that no announcements be made until after she was buried . In her final days , she moved to Ned 's nursing home in Camberwell , Victoria , to be with him . A small private service was held on 28 October 1981 . She also planned a state funeral at St Paul 's Cathedral for Ned , who died a few months after her on 5 January 1982 .