

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0619

Fitzpatrick, Kathleen Elizabeth

(1905 - 1990)

Born	7 September, 1905, Omeo Victoria Australia
-------------	--

Died	27 August, 1990, Melbourne Victoria Australia
-------------	---

Occupation	Associate professor, Author, Historian
-------------------	--

Summary

Appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for her service to education, particularly in the field of history, on 26 January 1989, Kathleen Fitzpatrick was the first woman council member of the National Library of Australia, and a foundation member of the Australian Humanities Research Council (later the Australian Academy of Humanities).

Details

Fitzpatrick was educated at Loreto Convents (Albert Park and Portland), Presentation Convent (Windsor) and Lauriston Girls' School (Melbourne) before attending the University of Melbourne. Following completion of her honours degree, in 1926, Fitzpatrick went to Oxford to complete another undergraduate degree – a common practice at the time. Returning to Australia she found employment at the University of Sydney before becoming a tutor in the English department at the University of Melbourne in 1930. Upon marriage, in 1932, to journalist (later historian) Brian Fitzpatrick, she had to resign her position at the University.

Following the failure of her marriage, Fitzpatrick was advised by the University Appointments Board that 'the only demand for female workers was for good secretaries'. It was recommended that she become proficient in typewriting and shorthand if she wanted to find employment. She enrolled at the Melbourne Technical School (now the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology), completed the required subjects and became a teacher of Shorthand and Commercial English at the school. In 1938 Fitzpatrick was offered her old position at the University of Melbourne. Before retiring in 1962 she held positions of lecturer, senior lecturer and associate professor of history.

During World War II Fitzpatrick was president of the Council for Women in War. She negotiated with employers on behalf of University of Melbourne women students working at Shepparton under Manpower regulations. In her retirement Fitzpatrick concentrated on research and writing and was disappointed in not being able to find a publisher for her *magnum opus*, a book on the novelist Henry James.

Former student, professional historian and close friend Manning Clark read the eulogy at the Requiem Mass for Kathleen Fitzpatrick held at St Thomas Aquinas, South Yarra on Friday 31 August 1990.

Events

1942 - 1948

Senior lecturer of History at the University of Melbourne

1938 - 1942

Lecturer of History at the University of Melbourne

1956 - 1956

Foundation member of the Australian Humanities Research Council (later Australian Academy of the Humanities)

1930 - 1932

Tutor in the English department of the University of Melbourne

1929 - 1929

Temporary lecturer in the history department of the University of Sydney

1935 - 1935

Separated from her husband

1936 - 1936

Became a student in the business section of the Melbourne Technical School (now the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) learning typing and shorthand

1937 - 1937

Teacher of shorthand and commercial English at the Melbourne Technical School

1989 - 1989

Appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for her service to education, particularly in the field of history

1949 - 1949

Publication: *Sir John Franklin in Tasmania* published by Melbourne University Press

1958 - 1958

Publication: *Australian Explorers* published by Oxford University Press

1975 - 1975

Publication: *PLC Melbourne: The First Century* published by PLC (Melbourne)

1948 - 1962

Associate Professor of History at the University of Melbourne

1928 - 1928

Graduated BA from Oxford University

1933 - 1933

Graduated MA from Oxford University

2032 - 1940

Married Brian Fitzpatrick a journalist and later historian

1926 - 1926

Graduated BA (Hons) from the University of Melbourne

1983 - 1983

Publication: *Solid Bluestone Foundations and Other Memories of a Melbourne Childhood, 1908-1928* published by Macmillan

Published resources

Book

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

Australian explorers : a selection from their writings with an introduction, Fitzpatrick, Kathleen, 1905-1990, 1958

Martin Boyd, Fitzpatrick, Kathleen, 1905-1990., 1963

PLC Melbourne: the first century, 1875-1975, Fitzpatrick, Kathleen, 1905-1990., 1975

Sir John Franklin in Tasmania, 1837-1843, Fitzpatrick, Kathleen, 1905-1990.

Solid bluestone foundations and other memories of a Melbourne girlhood, 1908-1928, Fitzpatrick, Kathleen, 1905-1990., 1983

The letters of Lorna Maneschi to her family in Australia, Maneschi, Lorna., 1999-2000.

Melbourne University portraits : they called it "The Shop", Paper-Clip Collective., 1996

History for the homeless : Kathleen Fitzpatrick's vocation and ours., 1995

Shameful autobiographies : shame in contemporary Australian autobiographies and culture, Dalziell, Rosamund., 1999

Women historians and women's history : Kathleen Fitzpatrick (1905-1990), Margaret Kiddle (1914-1958) and the Melbourne History School, Carey, Jane, 1972- and Grimshaw, Patricia, 1938-, 2001

The Ballad revival in the XVIIIth century, Pitt, Kathleen Elizabeth, 1925

Edited Book

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

Who's Who of Australian Women, Lofthouse, Andrea, 1982

Who's Who in Australia 1950, Alexander, Joseph A, 1950

Dear Kathleen, dear Manning : the correspondence of Manning Clark and Kathleen Fitzpatrick 1949-1990, Clark, Manning, 1915-1991., 1996

Australian lives: an Oxford anthology, Hooton, Joy W. (Joy Wendy), 1935-, 1998

Resource Section

Webb, Jessie Stobo Watson (1880-1944), Fitzpatrick, Kathleen, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A120473b.htm>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Site Exhibition

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders>

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection

[Papers of Manning Clark, 1907-1992 \[manuscript\]](#)

The University of Melbourne Archives

[Pitt, Henry Arthur](#)

[University of Melbourne Department of History](#)

[University of Melbourne. Department of History](#)

[Correspondence of Kathleen Fitzpatrick](#)

[The Half Open Door](#)

[Fitzpatrick, Kathleen Elizabeth \(1905-1990\)](#)

National Library of Australia

[\[Biographical cuttings on Kathleen Fitzpatrick, writer and historian, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals\]](#)

Author Details

Anne Heywood

Created 24 October 2003

Last modified 15 July 2020