

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: PR00453

Piesse, Winifred Margaret

(1923 - 2017)

Born	12 June, 1923, Narre Warren Victoria Australia
-------------	--

Died	11 March, 2017, Wagin Western Australia Australia
-------------	---

Occupation	Farmer, Justice of the Peace, Nurse, Parliamentarian, Shire Councillor
-------------------	--

Summary

Winifred Piesse became the first woman to represent the Country Party in the Western Australian Parliament when she was elected to the Legislative Council for a six year term, beginning in May 1977. Her extensive experience in nursing ensured that health matters were high on her Parliamentary agenda. She was particularly concerned about issues affecting children and youth, and also urged the government to urgently fund research into breast cancer, especially its high incidence in young mothers.

Details

Winifred Margaret Aumann was born in 1923 to Frederick Benjamin Aumann, an orchardist, and Marguerite Gertrude Pettingill. She was educated at Narre Warren State School and Dandenong High School, and later completed certificates in Nursing, Midwifery and Child Health. Winifred worked as a nurse in Melbourne from 1944 until 1946, when she moved to Western Australia and worked in hospitals in Busselton and Narrogin. In 1947 she married Mervyn Piesse, a farmer at Wagin in Western Australia, about 230 kilometres south-east of Perth.

Winifred Piesse joined the Country Party in 1948 and worked as both branch and divisional secretary. When her husband died in 1966, she returned to nursing and also managed farms in the Wagin area. She was the first woman to be elected to the Wagin Shire Council, in August 1971, and also became a Justice of the Peace in that year.

Winifred Piesse became the first woman to represent the Country Party in the Western Australian Parliament when she was elected to the Legislative Council for a six year term, beginning in May 1977. Her extensive experience in nursing ensured that health matters were high on her Parliamentary agenda. She was particularly concerned about issues affecting children and youth, and also urged the government to urgently fund research into breast cancer, especially its high incidence in young mothers.

Piesse lost her seat in 1983, her preferences helping to elect the Liberal candidate. After leaving Parliament Piesse served for three years on the local hospital board, and maintained her strong links with community organisations including the Country Women's Association, Farmer's Union, and the St. John's Ambulance Brigade.

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book Section

Making a Difference: Women in the West Australian Parliament 1921-1999, Black, David and Phillips, Harry, 2000

Edited Book

Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia, Vol. 2, 1930-1990, Black, David and Bolton, Geoffrey, 1990

Archival resources

State Library of Western Australia

[\[Interview with Winifred Margaret Piesse, politician\] \[sound recording\] / \[interviewed by Gail O'Hanlon\]](#)

Author Details

Lisa MacKinney

Created 7 October 2009

Last modified 22 October 2020