

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person

**Entry ID:** AWE0838

## Somerville, Dorothy Catherine

(1897 - 1992)

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**Born** 12 May, 1897, Unley South Australia Australia

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**Died** 31 December, 1992

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**Occupation** Lawyer, Solicitor

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### Summary

The daughter of Archibald and Seca (née Lewin) Somerville, Dorothy Somerville was educated at Brownhill Creek School in Mitcham, the Methodists Ladies College (now Annesley College) and the Adelaide Law School. She was the third woman admitted to practice law in South Australia in 1922. Mary Kitson, the first woman admitted to the Bar, joined with Somerville in 1925 to form Australia's first women's legal partnership: Kitson & Somerville. Kitson later went to Sydney to work in publishing, and in 1950 she moved to New York to take charge of the United Nations affairs on the Status of Women. Somerville, who continued with the legal practice, became an honorary solicitor to a number of women's organisations.

## Events

### **1955 - 1955**

Honorary solicitor to the Women's Memorial Playing Fields

### **1921 - 1921**

Foundation Member of the Lyceum Club (Adelaide) Incorporated

### **1971 - 1971**

Honorary Life member of the Lyceum Club (Adelaide) Incorporated

### **1945 - 1945**

Honorary Life member of the South Australian Women's Hockey Association

### **1945 - 1945**

Honorary solicitor to the Wanslea Inc (Emergency Homes for Children)

### **1948 - 1975**

Honorary solicitor to the Australian Croquet Council

### **1986 - 1986**

Appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for service to the Legal profession and to the community

### **1919 - 1919**

Graduated Bachelor of Arts (BA) (Hons) from Adelaide University

### **1922 - 1922**

Graduated Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from Adelaide University

### **1925 - 1925**

Solicitor in private practice

### **1925 - 1971**

Honorary solicitor to the Country Women's Association (SA)

### **1925 - 1974**

Honorary solicitor to the South Australian Women's Hockey Association

### **1925 - 1925**

Honorary solicitor to the South Australian Women's Croquet Association

## Published resources

### **Book**

Greater than their knowing: a glimpse of South Australian women 1836-1986, National Council of Women of South Australia, 1986

### **Edited Book**

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

### **Resource**

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

### **Resource Section**

Law, Kerwin, Hollie and Rubenstein, Kim, 2014,  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0624b.htm>

### **Site Exhibition**

Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens, Trailblazing Women Lawyers Project Team, 2016,  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/lawyers>

## Archival resources

### **State Library of South Australia**

[Interview with Dorothy Somerville \[sound recording\] Interviewer: Yvonne Abbott](#)

### **National Library of Australia**

[\[Biographical cuttings on Dorothy Somerville, solicitor, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals\]](#)

### **Author Details**

Anne Heywood and Robin Secomb

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