

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE1148

Weber, Ivy Lavinia

(1892 - 1976)

Born 7 June, 1892, Captains Flat New South Wales Australia

Died 6 March, 1976, Camberwell Victoria Australia

Occupation Parliamentarian, Political candidate, Women's rights activist

Summary

Ivy Lavinia Weber was the first woman to be elected to the Victorian parliament in a general election in 1937. She stood as an endorsed candidate for the Women Electors' League of Victoria for the seat of Nunawading. As an active member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, she was encouraged to stand for parliament as an independent candidate to represent women. She was re-elected on two occasions, but resigned her state seat in 1943 to contest the federal seat of Henty as part of the League of Women Voters Women for Canberra Movement. She was unsuccessful on that occasion and in 1945 when she again stood for state parliament. She retired from politics after the second defeat.

Details

Ivy Weber was born in 1892 in New South Wales, the only girl in a family of five children. She married in 1915, but was widowed in 1917, when her husband was killed in action in World War One. She was left with a small child and moved to Melbourne to join her parents. In 1919 she married Clarence Weber, a widower with seven young children. They had three more children. Clarence Weber, a physical culturist, was principal of the Weber and Rice Health and Strength College and Ivy assisted with the administration of the College. In addition she was actively involved in the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the National Council of Women and the Australasian Women's Association. Clarence Weber died in 1930 and Ivy had to earn a living to support her large family. She worked for Berlei the corset manufacturers, lecturing women on figure control through diet and exercise.

In June 1937 the League of Women Electors of Victoria was formed and endorsed three candidates, including Weber to stand for the state parliament. Their manifesto was 'Mother, Child, Family, Home and Health.' She was elected to the Victorian parliament in 1937 and was re-elected in 1940 and again in 1943, but resigned to contest the federal seat of Henty as part of the League of Women Voters Women for Canberra Movement.

Weber's political platform was built on the premise that a true democracy should provide economic security and thus alleviate distress and unemployment. In her view the state should provide free education from kindergarten to university. She proposed a systematic national health scheme as a means of raising the national health standard, advocated the removal of slum dwellings and the erection of suitable homes for families. She also wanted to implement a comprehensive scheme of national insurance.

As a member of parliament she lobbied successfully for female representation on government boards and espoused equal pay for teachers, but she only approved of married women working in desperate circumstances. She believed that women should be on local councils and juries and advocated a homemaker's allowance for women with families. She was an advocate for the Physical Education Course at the University of Melbourne, the first of its kind in Australia, and was one of the first members of the National Co-ordinating Council for Physical Fitness, later known as the National Fitness Council.

Events

2001 - 2001

Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

Published resources

Edited Book

Worth her Salt: Women at Work in Australia, Bevege, Margaret, James, Margaret and Schute, Carmel, 1982

Double Time: Women in Victoria - 150 Years, Lake, Marilyn and Kelly, Farley, 1985

Book Section

Ivy Lavinia Weber MLA, Davies, Vicki and Hawker, Philippa, 1982

Eleanor Glencross and Ivy Weber: In and out of parliament, Browne, Geoff, 1985

Resource Section

Weber, Ivy Lavinia (1892-1976), Browne, Geoff, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A120478b.htm>

Ivy Lavinia Weber, McPhee, Peter and Flesch, Juliet, 2003,
http://www.unimelb.edu.au/150/150_people/weber.html

Women in Parliament, 2003,
<http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/women.html>

Site Exhibition

Carrying on the Fight: Women Candidates in Victorian Parliamentary Elections, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2008,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/cws/home.html>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of Victoria

[Ivy Lavinia Weber, Victorian M.L.A., 1937-1943, 1979. \[manuscript\].](#)

Author Details

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