

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE3780

## James, Barbara

(1943 - 2003)

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**Born** 8 November, 1943, Holdrege Nebraska United States of America

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**Died** 31 March, 2003, Darwin Northern Territory Australia

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**Occupation** Historian, Journalist, Print journalist

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### Summary

Barbara James was born in Nebraska, USA, in 1943, and came to Australia in 1966. She began her working life in the Northern Territory in 1967 as a journalist, an occupation which later led to her work as an author, historian and research consultant. Her particular interests and areas of research were women and history/heritage issues.

### Details

In July 1967, Barbara James, based in Canberra at the time, took a two week holiday to Darwin and never went back. When her car broke down on the return trip she came back to Darwin, found a job as a journalist with the *Northern Territory News*, and eventually married a Darwin lawyer, Geoff James, whom she had met while living in Canberra. She lived in Darwin until she passed away in 2003 when she lost her battle with cancer.

As well as being an accomplished writer, James was also an active member of an extraordinary variety of community groups and had a strong background in political work as a result of serving as an adviser to Bob Collins when he was Leader of the Opposition in the Northern Territory (1982-1985) and when he was a Minister in the Federal Labor government and as a Shadow Minister.

Barbara is the author or co-author of several published social history works, including *No Man's Land: Women of the Northern Territory*.

She was in Darwin in 1974 when Cyclone Tracy devastated the city. She was eventually evacuated, and while away became involved in citizen's groups, taking part in many meetings of evacuees very concerned at media reports about events back home, and at the extreme nature of new town plan provisions. She actively liaised with Darwinians, the then Department of Urban and Regional Development, ACOSS and the Cities Commission, and with the Environment Centre in Darwin.

### Events

**1967 - 2000**

## Published resources

### Book

Fit for the gentler sex' : a social and site history of the settlement of Port Darwin and its environs, a commemoration of the contribution women have made to the Territory, Wilson, Helen J. and Barbara James in association with Mickey Dewar, 1997

Occupation, citizen : the story of Northern Territory women and the vote (1894-96), James, Barbara, c1995

### Site Exhibition

The Women's Pages: Australian Women and Journalism since 1850, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2008, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/cal/cal-home.html>

### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

## Archival resources

### Northern Territory Archives Service

JAMES Barbara NTRS 226 TS 581

James, Barbara: Copyprints of Darwin after Cyclone Tracy including evacuation and emergency centres 1974-1975

### Author Details

Nikki Henningham

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