

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4107

Darling, Elaine Elizabeth

(1936 - 2019)

Born	6 June, 1936, Brisbane Queensland Australia
Died	30 August, 2019, Sunshine Coast Queensland Australia
Occupation	Parliamentarian, Teacher

Summary

A member of a strong Australian Labor Party family, Elaine Darling was the first woman from Queensland to be elected to the House of Representatives in the Australian Parliament in 1980. She was the fifth woman elected to the House of Representatives, and the second female Labor member of that House. She represented the electorate of Lilley until her retirement in 1993.

When Elaine Darling first arrived in parliament in 1980, as one of three women elected, the custom was still to refer to parliamentarians as a collective as 'The Honourable Gentlemen of the House.' When the Speaker of the House, Billy Sneddon, called the House to order, he asked the Honourable Gentlemen to sit. Elaine Darling remained standing and, when asked to explain herself, said 'Mr. Speaker, I am no gentleman'. That custom changed, and slowly, progressively, others did too.

Details

Elaine Darling was educated at the University of Queensland before becoming a teacher. She rose to the role of assistant to the Director of the Brisbane Kindergarten Training College.

Her father, Jack Melloy, was a long serving member of the Australian Labor Party and member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland. Her daughter, Vicki Darling, was a Member of the Queensland House of Assembly from 2006 – 2012.

Published resources

Book
They spoke out pretty good: politics and gender in the Brisbane Aboriginal Rights Movement 1958-1962, Darling, Elaine, 1999

Journal Article
They spoke out pretty good: the leadership of women in the Brisbane Aboriginal rights movement, 1958/ 1962, Darling, Elaine, 1996

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Author Details
Rosemary Francis and Nikki Henningham

Created 1 April 2009
Last modified 10 September 2019