

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4311

Barff, Jane Foss

(1863 - 1937)

Born 24 October, 1863, Sydney New South Wales Australia

Died 10 June, 1937

Occupation Educator, Women's rights activist

Summary

Jane Foss Barff was a leading advocate for women's education at the University of Sydney. She was also active in charitable and church activities.

Details

Education

Barff was among the second group of women to enrol at the University of Sydney (in 1883), where she studied classics, chemistry, physics and mathematics. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1886, with first class honours in classics. In 1889 she became the second woman to receive a Masters in Arts from the University of Sydney.

Career

Barff undertook a study tour of England in 1886-67, including visits to Girton and Newnham women's colleges; on her return to Australia she taught at Ascham, and later at Kambala, both schools in Sydney, New South Wales.

She left school teaching in 1892 to succeed Helen Phillips as the tutor to women students at the University of Sydney, the only female post on the teaching staff. She resigned from the position in 1899 to marry Henry Ebenezer Barff, the university registrar and librarian.

Activism/Community work

Barff's involvement with Sydney University women's organisations was extensive. Between 1891-96 she supervised classes at Harrington Street night school for girls, which was established by the Sydney University Women's Society. During this period she joined forces with Louisa McDonald in 1892 to form the Sydney University Women's Association. She had a long involvement with the Council of the Women's College, University of Sydney, between 1891-1937. She also served as President of the University Women's Settlement between 1914-15, 1919-24. In honour of her contribution, The Sydney Central student services building at the University of Sydney was named after her.

Barff was also a member of the National Council of Women; the Mothers' Union; and the St Catherine's Church of England School for Girls.

Published resources

Resource Section

Barff, Jane Foss (1863-1937), Bygott, Ursula, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/AS10024b.htm>

Book

The History of the Women's College within the University of Sydney, Hole, W. Vere and Anne H. Treweweke, 1953

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Author Details

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