

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: AWE5382

Battye, Margaret

(1909 - 1949)

Born 9 August, 1909, Subiaco Western Australia Australia

Died 16 November, 1949, Subiaco Western Australia

Occupation Barrister, Lawyer, Political party organiser, Solicitor, Women's rights activist

Summary

Margaret Battye was the only child of Nellie May (née Robertson) and Charles Battye, a librarian. She graduated from the University of Western Australia (LL.B., 1931; B.A., 1933) and was admitted to the Bar in 1933. In June of 1933 she reputedly became the first woman to represent a client in a Western Australian court of law, and in so doing, according to the presiding magistrate, 'created legal history' by being the first woman to appear before him as a barrister. She won the case. From 1936 she practised on her own as a barrister and solicitor, and from 1939 worked for the Council for Civil Liberties.

Battye was active in several Western Australian women's organisations, including the local branch of the Australian Federation of University Women, the Women's Services Guilds, the Perth Business and Professional Women's Club, the Karrakatta and the Soroptimist Clubs. She acted as honorary legal adviser to almost all the women's organisations in Perth during the 1930s and 40s. She was also active in the Liberal Party of Australia's Western Australian division and was given responsibility for the foundation of the State women's committee. She chaired a national committee for the United Nations' commission into the status of women

She became ill with Grave's disease and passed away in 1949.

Published resources

Resource Section

Battye, Margaret (1919-1949), Medcalf, M., 2006,
<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/battye-margaret-9454>

Article

Creating Legal History: Miss Margaret Battye's Debut, 1933,
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article75504232>

Nationality of Women: Address by Margaret Battye, 1936,
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article40737607>

Miss Battye Remembered, 1950,
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article80829861>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Site Exhibition

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

Author Details

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