

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE6067

Gundolf, Cordelia

(1917 - 2008)

Born 30 November, 1917, Munich Germany

Died 10 September, 2008, Benalla Victoria Australia

Occupation Academic, Teacher

Details

Cordelia Gundolf, who taught Italian, and headed the department from 1971 to 1982, had, like many immigrants to Australia, an extraordinary life. Her father, Friedrich Gundolf (1880-1931) was a renowned literary critic and university professor, her mother, Agathe Mallachow (1884-1983) a pianist. Brought up in the heart of the German cultural elite, she learned to speak English, French and Italian as a child. She also became very competent in Latin and Ancient Greek, Spanish, and taught herself to read Modern Greek, maintaining it was not very different from Ancient Greek, once one got the hang of it.

When Hitler assumed power in Germany, her mother, conscious of the peril in which her Jewish father (even after his death) might place her, asked Albert Einstein for advice. They met in Paris and following his suggestion, mother and daughter went first to Capri, where they were used to spending the summer, and subsequently to Rome. In 1935 her Italian diary, *Myrtles and Mice: leaves from the Italian diary of Cordelia Gundolf* was published by John Murray.[1]

Cordelia Gundolf took her doctoral degree from Rome's La Sapienza University with a thesis on Germans in Naples in the 18th century. In 1944 she married Fred Manor and at the end of the War she was employed by the Allies translating German documents into Italian. Divorced and with two young children, she took up a lectureship in the newly-established Italian Department in 1960. The *Age* reported the arrival of a 'dark-haired, dark-eyed' new lecturer who 'has a quick, ready smile and speaks English in a series of quick, rapid phrases', noting also that she was bilingual in German and Italian and had translated a biography of Konrad Adenauer.[2] She continued to publish scholarly articles and translate books from both English and German into Italian, among them Friedrich Meinecke's *Die Entstehung des Historismus*. [3]

Cordelia Gundolf's principal interest lay in Italian literature rather than language teaching and her wide knowledge and approachability made her an engaging teacher. Both of her daughters are University of Melbourne alumnae. Olivia Manor took her BA in 1968 and DipEd in 1969. She taught Italian at a number of secondary schools for almost 40 years and, with her mother's help, published two Italian text books for junior and middle secondary school.[4] Delfina Manor graduated BA DipEd in 1974. She runs Good Reading Secondhand Books in Benalla.

[1] Cordelia Gundolf. *Myrtles and Mice: leaves from the Italian diary of Cordelia Gundolf*. Translated by R.W. Reynolds. London: John Murray, 1935.

[2] 'Translator is House Hunting'. *Age*. 14 April 1960: 6; Edgar Alexander. *Adenauer e la Nuova Germania*. Naples: Politica Popolare, 1959.

[3] Friedrich Meinecke. *Le Origini dello Storicismo*. Florence: Sansoni, 1967.

[4] Olivia Manor. *Dimmi una Parola*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1983; Olivia Manor. *Dimmi un'altra Parola: an intermediate Italian course*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Published resources

Book

40 Years 40 Women: Biographies of University of Melbourne Women, Published to Commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the International Year of Women, Flesch, Juliet, 2015,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/4040/>

Author Details

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