

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE6084

## Shaw, Noel

(1916 - 2012)

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**Born** 1 January, 1916

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**Died** 31 December, 2012

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**Occupation** Philanthropist, Social worker, Traveller

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### Details

Jessie Noel Shaw nee Henderson was someone who never forgot her alma mater. After taking her BA in 1937 from the University of Western Australia, she moved to Melbourne, taking her Graduate Diploma in Social Studies in 1943 and undertaking further studies in Psychology. Her sister, Margaret Henderson, began her distinguished medical career at the University of Melbourne slightly earlier. She took her MBBS in 1938, MD in 1941 and DMedSc in 2012.

Noel Henderson had been an active student at UWA, twice organising the Graduation Ball and attending the 1937 Adelaide Undergraduates Conference, at which the National Union of Australian University Students was established. The *Australian Women's Weekly* noted that she was the only female delegate. The *Advertiser*, in an article headed 'University Men to Confer', took a different slant, noting that as well as their President, UWA had sent 'one other student'.<sup>[1]</sup> At UWA Noel Henderson studied modern literature and edited the University's Guild of Undergraduates' magazine *The Black Swan*.

In 1941 she married a fellow UWA student, (Frederick) Stanley Shaw who became, after a distinguished career at the Aeronautical Research Laboratories, professor of Engineering at the University of New South Wales in 1960. Noel Shaw worked as a social worker assisting disadvantaged children. On her death, a local newsletter reported that:

Noel was an intrepid traveller, particularly interested in remote cultures. Her last adventure was to Afghanistan where a week later her hotel was bombed. She served as secretary and president of the Artarmon Bowling Club, belonged to Probus and was interested in music, drama and literature. She was a generous and independent person and will be missed by her many friends and neighbours in Castlecrag.<sup>[2]</sup>

Her generosity was certainly apparent towards the University. Following a succession of significant gifts from 2008 to 2011, in October 2012 the University of Melbourne received Noel Shaw's bequest of \$2.3 million. The Noel Shaw Gallery on the first floor of the Baillieu Library recognises this extraordinary benefaction. The first exhibition, from March to August 2014, 'Radicals, Slayers and Villains: Prints from the Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne' travelled to the Art Gallery of Ballarat in 2014 and subsequently to the Hamilton Art Gallery and the Latrobe Regional Gallery.<sup>[3]</sup>

[1] 'Upheld Prestige of Her Sex'. *Australian Women's Weekly*. 13 March 1937: 23; 'University Men to Confer: Delegates from All States'. *Advertiser*. 30 January 1937: 14.

[2] 'Jessie Noel Shaw (1916-2012)'. *The Crag: Newsletter of the Castlecrag Progress Association Inc.* May 2012: 4.

[3] *Radicals Slayers and Villains: prints from the Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne*. Curated by Kerriane Stone. Melbourne: University of Melbourne Library, 2014.

### 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, Fleisch, Juliet, 2015,  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/4040/>

**Author Details**

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