

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: AWE6247

Millerd, Alison (Adele)

(1921 - 2017)

Born 21 October, 1921, Sydney New South Wales Australia

Died 3 December, 2017, SydneySydney New South Wales Australia

Occupation Lecturer, Plant biochemist, Scientist

Summary

Plant biochemist Adele Millerd was one of Australia's first female Fulbright Scholars.

Details

Alison (Adele) Millerd was born in Sydney in 1921. As both her parents were school teachers her family moved regularly, and Adele mostly attended schools where her father taught.

In 1940 Adele won an exhibition to the University of Sydney and she lived at Women's College while she studied chemistry for three years. During her studies, she offered tuition to other women who had not studied science at school. Adele worked for a time at the Riverstone Meatworks, however soon moved on to a private pathology practice where she was responsible for their biochemistry.

When the University of Sydney became inundated with returned soldiers in 1945, Adele joined the biochemistry department and, as a teaching fellow, offered courses to medical and dental students. She enrolled in a masters course, majoring in biochemistry. She also lectured in that area.

Adele received a Linnean Macleay fellowship for her research and after completing her masters, enrolled in a PhD. After a visit from Dr James Bronner of the Californian Institute of Technology, Adele applied for, and was awarded, a Fulbright scholarship to study in America. Adele was one of the two first female students, and the first scientist, to receive the scholarship.

Adele returned from the United States in 1953 and was appointed a senior lecturer in the biochemistry department of the University of Sydney. She took study leave in 1959 at the McCollum Pratt Institute at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Adele once again returned to Australia and took up an appointment in agricultural chemistry at the Waite Institute, South Australia. She joined the genetics section of CSIRO's plant industry division in 1963 as a molecular biologist and biochemist, later transferring to the plant physiology section.

During her time at the CSIRO, Adele took two periods of leave. First of all, she spent time at the University of California, San Diego, where she studied the accumulation of storage proteins in legume seeds. Adele also took leave after being awarded a Royal Nuffield fellowship, which saw her work as an overseas fellow at Churchill College, Cambridge. Adele retired from the CSIRO in 1982.

Adele moved to Sydney in May 2017 to be near her relatives. She passed away in December 2017 at the age of 80.

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection

[Adele Millerd interviewed by Alice Garner in the Fulbright scholars oral history project \[sound recording\]](#)

Author Details

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