

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0115

Sweet, Georgina

(1875 - 1946)

Nationality	Australian
Born	22 January, 1875, Brunswick Victoria Australia
Died	1 January, 1946, Canterbury Victoria Australia
Occupation	Academic, Philanthropist, Women's rights activist, Zoologist

Summary

Georgina Sweet was Australia's first female Acting Professor (Biology, University of Melbourne, 1916-1917). She was Associate Professor of Zoology at the University of Melbourne from 1920 to 1924. Sweet's research included the zoology of Australian native animals and the parasites infesting Australian stock and native fauna. She was appointed OBE – Officer of The Order of the British Empire (Civil) – 3 June 1935, for services to women's movements.

Details

Georgina Sweet was born in Brunswick, Melbourne, the eldest daughter of George Sweet and his wife Fanny (née Dudman). Both parents were born in England. George was a tradesman and later ran the Brunswick Brick, Tile and Pottery Company.

Georgina Sweet was the University of Melbourne's first female Associate Professor. She was a member of the Royal Society of Victoria and the Australian Association for Advancement of Science. She was highly intelligent and ambitious enough to use her talents. She won the University of Melbourne's MacBain scholarship and completed her Bachelor of Science, then a Masters and finally her Doctorate in 1904. Though Sweet reportedly never felt disadvantaged by her sex, she was a strong supporter of women's rights. She pushed for the admission of women to the University senate and worked to establish the University Women's College. She served as Australian president of the YWCA (1927-1934); vice-president of the world YWCA from 1934; foundation member of the Victorian Women Graduates' Association; and first president of the Pan-Pacific Women's Association (1930).

Having inherited some wealth from her father, Sweet's philanthropic gifts were largely directed toward the University of Melbourne and the Methodist Church. Publicity material from the University states that Sweet left 'a generous bequest to endow fellowships in geology, zoology and medicine'. In fact, her original gift of £22,500 is now worth over half a million dollars to the institution with a further \$200,000 in accumulated income. The Georgina Sweet bursary in social studies was established in 1946, the year of her death, in her memory.

Published resources

Journal Article

Georgina Sweet: A Brilliant Career, Anderson, F, 2000

Obituary: Dr Georgina Sweet, Agar, W. E., 1946

Resource Section

Sweet, Georgina(1875-1946), MacCallum, Monica, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A120168b.htm>

Sweet, Georgina (1875 - 1946), Biographical Entry, 2002,
<http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/bsparcs/biogs/P000820b.htm>

Resource

Where are the Women in Australian science?, Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre, 2003,
<http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/wisa/wisa.html>

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book

Degrees of liberation : a short history of women in the University of Melbourne, Kelly, Farley, 1985

Jessie Webb, a memoir, Ridley, Ronald T, 1994

Book Section

Garden Parties and Politics : The Victorian Women's Graduate Association 1920-1945, Ruljancich, Sally, 2000

Edited Book

200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology, Radi, Heather, 1988

Thesis

In Her Gift: Activism and Altruism in Australian Women's Philanthropy, 1880-2005, Lemon, Barbara, 2008

Site Exhibition

Faith, Hope and Charity Australian Women and Imperial Honours: 1901-1989, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2003,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/honours/honours.html>

In Her Gift: Women Philanthropists in Australian History, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2009,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/wiph/home.html>

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders>

Archival resources

The University of Melbourne Archives

[Sweet, Georgina \(1875-1946\)](#)

[Webb, Jessie Stobo Watson](#)

Museums Victoria Collections

[Georgina Sweet - Records](#)

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection

[Papers on various Australian women \[19--\] \[manuscript\]](#)

Author Details

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Created 20 October 1993

Last modified 15 March 2019