

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: PR00312

Marlay, Elaine

(1915 - 1977)

Born 9 October, 1915, Coorparoo, Brisbane Queensland Australia

Died 3 May, 1977, South Brisbane Queensland Australia

Occupation Academic, Dentist

Summary

Appointed as temporary lecturer in the department of dentistry, University of Queensland, in 1961, Mrs Marlay joined the department staff in 1965 as lecturer in oral biology. She was awarded a Ph.D. in 1969 for a study of the incident of dental caries in adolescent girls; her project also contributed to knowledge about tests of buffering capacity of saliva and the ability to predict dental caries increments. On 1 January 1971 Dr Marlay was made a senior lecturer.

Details

On 6 August 1943 at St John's Anglican Cathedral, Elaine Wilson married Mervyn Marlay, a 24-year-old soldier in the Australian Imperial Force. When the war ended, her husband's employment in banking took them to various country centres where she worked as a part-time or full-time dentist. In the late 1950s they settled in Brisbane.

Throughout her professional career, Marlay endeavoured to further her education and to promote the role of women in a male-dominated profession. A skilled and persuasive debater, she was president (for two years) of the Amara Study Group, a society of female dentists. In 1975 she contributed a chapter on women in dentistry to a book commemorating International Women's year. Taking study leave in 1976, she examined schemes for the continuing education of women dentists in the United States of America, Europe and England, and presented a report recommending that similar measures be implemented in Australia. While abroad, she represented the Australian Committee on Overseas Professional Qualifications as an official visitor to dental schools at universities in Paris.

Following several years of research and consultation, Marlay completed the final draft of *History of Dental Education in Queensland 1863-1964* (Brisbane, 1979). Despite holding strong views on the changes that had occurred in the university's department of dentistry from the time she had graduated, she refrained from expressing her opinions in writing 'because she was part of the history she recorded'. The department published her book after her death.

