

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: PR00441

McAleer, Margaret

(1930 - 1999)

Born 16 February, 1930, Perth Western Australia Australia

Died 30 March, 1999, Perth Western Australia Australia

Occupation Parliamentarian

Summary

From 1974 to 1993 Margaret McAleer served in the Parliament of Western Australia. She was the first non-Labor member of the Legislative Council, and served as Whip from 1980 to 1993.

Details

Margaret McAleer was born in 1930 to medical practitioner James McAleer and his wife Kathleen. Margaret was educated at Stella Maris College in Geraldton, Western Australia, then at Loreto Convent in Claremont, Perth. She completed a Bachelor of Arts with Honours (History) at the University of Melbourne, and during this time became a member of the Liberal Party of Australia. She travelled to Europe in 1951, then returned to Perth and studied at the University of Western Australia.

During the mid-1950s, McAleer became a director of the Wopenatty Pastoral Company, and through the 1960s was actively involved in farming with her brother at Arrino near Three Springs, about 300 kilometers north of Perth, Western Australia. She served for seven years on the Three Springs Shire Council, and was also a member of the Pastoralists and Graziers' Association, Farmers' Union, Country Women's Association, Business and Professional Women's Association and Karrakatta Club.

In May 1974 Margaret McAleer became the first female non-Labor politician to sit in the Legislative Council, after an unsuccessful attempt to enter the Senate in 1970. McAleer's extensive farming experience ensured that the needs of her rural constituency were always high on her Parliamentary agenda. She was re-elected for the Upper West Province in 1980 and 1986 and then for the Agricultural Region in 1989. From 1980 to 1983 she held the position of Government Whip, and was Opposition Whip from 1983 to 1993. In 1990 McAleer served as Assistant Shadow Minister for Women's Interests, and was also member of a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association delegation to Zimbabwe. She retired from politics when her term expired in May 1993.

In 1985, McAleer married Angus Cameron, who died in 1988. Margaret McAleer died in 1999 after a long illness.

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Edited Book

Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia, Vol. 2, 1930-1990, Black, David and Bolton, Geoffrey, 1990

Book Section

Making a Difference: Women in the West Australian Parliament 1921-1999, Black, David and Phillips, Harry, 2000

Site Exhibition

The Women's Pages: Australian Women and Journalism since 1850, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2008, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/cal/cal-home.html>

Archival resources

State Library of Western Australia

[\[Interview with Margaret McAleer, politician\] \[sound recording\] / \[interviewed by Erica Harvey\]](#)

Author Details

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