

A historic birthday lunch

Miss Jean Arnot is still eloquent—and stunning them—at ninety years of age, writes Janine Schmidt

Jean Fleming Arnot, MBE, FLAA turned ninety years of age on 23 April 1993. Jean Arnot worked at the State Library of NSW (formerly the Public Library of NSW) from 1921-1968, as Extension Librarian, Head Cataloguer, and Acting Mitchell Librarian. With her retirement, she became the Honorary Librarian of the Royal Historical Society. She was a member and Councillor of the Australian Institute of Librarians, and a foundation member of the Library Association of Australia in 1949. She represented Australia at the first International Conference on Cataloguing Principles at UNESCO in Paris in 1961, was Convener of the Cataloguing Code Revision Committee in 1961, and won British Council and Carnegie Corporation grants to study in the UK and USA in 1948 and 1949.

As well as her professional achievements, Jean Arnot has been a tireless worker for women's rights. She has been an active participant in the fight for equal pay since 1937, and an advocate for the advancement of women's concerns and social issues. Opportunities available for women today, particularly in the profession of librarianship, were secured by the front runners, women like Jean Arnot. She has been involved in many women's clubs and associations



Jean Arnot speaking at her 90th birthday luncheon

over the years. Jean Arnot's many achievements were recognised by the award of the MBE in 1965, and the award of the Fellowship of the Library Association of Australia in ?

Jean Arnot is held in great affection and esteem by her family, friends and her many colleagues. The Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women and the National Council of Women of

NSW, with the assistance of the State Library of NSW, organised a lunch to mark her ninetieth birthday and to honour her many achievements.

There were so many people who wanted to come that two lunches were held, one at Parliament House in Sydney on 19 April, and the second at the Women's Club on 23 April 1993. Surrounded by her family, friends, colleagues and distinguished guests she demonstrated the strength of character and purpose for which she has become famous.

Guests were given the copy of a debate in which she participated in 1946, *Should both sexes receive equal pay for equal work?*

Jean Arnot spoke to all who attended the lunches about the various influences on her life, and showed that she is still a most accomplished speaker and that she has had a full, fortunate and above all fruitful life. ■

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