

Daws, Joyce Margaretta DBE (1925-2007)

Joyce Margaretta Daws was born in Hounslow, England. Educated at the Royal School for Naval and Marine Officers' Daughters, she won a scholarship to Cambridge University where she specialised in classics. During the Second World War she enrolled at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine and graduated MBBs in 1949. She was awarded a postgraduate scholarship in surgery in 1952, the same year she passed fellowship examinations of the RCS.

She worked at the Royal Free Hospital until 1956, when Lorna Sisely visited the hospital looking for another woman surgeon to join the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital in Melbourne, then staffed exclusively by women, and Joyce decided to accept the offer. She joined the hospital as a resident that year, becoming part of a circle of remarkable women doctors, including Dame Kate Campbell and Dame Ella MacKnight. She subsequently specialised in thoracic surgery, serving not only at QVMH but also at Prince Henry's and The Alfred Hospitals until 1985.

A stalwart of the Victorian Medical Women's Association, she became its representative on the AMA branch council. She broke new ground when she became the first woman to be elected president of the Victorian branch of the AMA in 1975, the same year she was created Dame Commander of the British Empire.

Dame Joyce was a member of the Victorian Nursing Council from 1974-2007, being Chair from 1983-89. She gave a \$10,000 bequest in her Will to the Nurses Board of Victoria. She was President of the Cancer Institute of Victoria and a Board member from 1978-80.

Her membership of the Victorian Medical Benevolent Association demonstrated her keen personal interest in the welfare of doctors and their families when in distress.

Joyce's retirement was taken up with a protea farm, originally started as a weekend project but which led to her participation in the international Protea Association, which she chaired from 1987-96. She died in 2007.

Last updated: 17 January 2025.

Source: Wikipedia and Chiron [S Hacker, L McEwan 2007, p.29].

Draft by Allan Mawdsley

