

Vale *Dorothy Ramsay*

After a long, varied and fruitful career, Dorothy Ramsay died on 19 March 2015 at the age of 78. She was a consummate professional and a generous and loyal friend to many. EUGENIE GREIG from Sydney tells us about this passionate woman.

Dorothy Ramsay refused to give up her cherished aim of becoming a librarian, despite significant difficulties with her eyesight. For years she undertook evening lectures for her Bachelor of Arts degree, together with private study for the Registration Certificate of the Library Association of Australia. Meanwhile, she moved through increasingly more responsible roles within the Public (later State) Library of New South Wales and the libraries of the Balmain and Bathurst Teachers' Colleges.

As a professional, Dorothy gained valuable overseas experience in the Medical Library of King's College, London. On her return to Sydney in late 1966, she joined the new Macquarie University Library and helped to establish and deliver effective library services to the very first students in 1967. In addition to extensive reference work responsibilities, she later became Deputy Head Cataloguer. Her good humour, patience and technical expertise were greatly appreciated by those she trained and supervised.

In 1980 a senior opening arose at her beloved State Library, and she returned there as Head Cataloguer. This was a critical time, when the automation of cataloguing records was in its early stages and library cooperation called for much professional sharing of ideas. Dorothy strongly supported Library Association of Australia meetings, including those of the NSW Group of the Cataloguers' Section.

In retirement Dorothy continued at the State Library as a volunteer guide, taking particular pride in showing visitors the splendid Shakespeare Room.

In the last weeks of her life, in the Terrey Hills Nursing Home, she wrote a paper on one of her favourite authors, Jane Austen.

At her funeral in the Roseville Uniting Church, a tribute by a lifelong friend, Margo Higgins, included the following:

'As we know, for some time now Dorothy has been living with health issues which required of her a great deal of strength and fortitude. Through all this she remained engaged with the larger issues of life, and caring of her friends and family.

'Through her years at HGHS [Hornsby Girls' High School] she pursued her love of reading and literature.

'Dorothy's love of drama and music saw her as a regular attendee of concerts and theatre in Sydney...[until] the time came that ... she was no longer able to attend. She explored the world, travelling to other countries, seeking out the



museums and the galleries which delighted her, appreciating the natural environment, to which she had a deep commitment, always ready to engage with people she met along the way.

'Perhaps best known of the causes she supported was her participation over many years in World Vision's 40 Hour Famine. Reluctantly, through health factors, there came a point when she could no longer participate in this, but not before World Vision recognised her as one of the most significant individual participants in this event.

'Dorothy's faith was expressed in her Christian belief and practised within and beyond the community of Roseville Uniting Church. Here she took on many positions of leadership and support, and again made many friends.'

Vale Dorothy – admired and remembered with gratitude and affection by many colleagues in the library world.



Australian Library and
Information Association

When you make a bequest to ALIA in your will, you will make a difference and leave a powerful legacy.

By making a bequest, you can leave an enduring gift that will help advance knowledge in the library and information sector, improve a student's educational prospects and reward important contributions to the sector.

Contact ALIA's Director of Corporate Services, David Patrick, for a confidential discussion about your bequest on 02 6215 8228.

