

Nomination for Tasmanian Honour Role of Women, 2019

Josephine Denne



Josephine Marie Denne was born in Hobart in 1923. She died in 2016, aged 92, after living most of her life on Bruny Island.

Josephine joined the Country Women's Association at the age of only 16 and remained a member all her life, serving as either President, Secretary or Treasurer of the North Bruny Branch for 76 years! She was instrumental in the merger of the North and South Bruny Island branches of the CWA into a single branch. In 2000 she received a special badge for 60 Years of Service to the CWA. Jo made significant contributions to the CWA including a submission to the National body on improvements to rural education of youth.

Josephine was also a long-serving member of the Royal Hobart Hospital Auxiliary, receiving life membership and a long service medal in recognition of her contributions. She was also a regular blood donor until she reached the maximum age for donating.

Josephine was a volunteer weather observer for the Bureau of Meteorology for over 30 years— an achievement that was recognized with a personal presentation to her by the Bureau in 2014.

In 1943 Josephine married Sefton Bottomley and they farmed the "Lauriston" property on North Bruny where they brought up their three sons. After just 7 years of very happy marriage Sefton tragically died from liver cancer. Josephine then married Ross Denne, and together they continued on the farm and raised the three boys. During those years Josephine helped make ends meet by selling homemade butter and fruit cakes to the local shop.

Josephine and Ross shared a love of and respect for nature and in 1991 they became aware that a colony of Forty Spotted Pardalotes on their property represented one of only a few surviving colonies for this critically endangered

bird species. This culminated in them gifting part of “Lauriston” to the government to form the “Denne’s Hill Nature Reserve”. This has contributed significantly to the survival of the Pardalotes and has become a mecca for bird lovers.

Josephine (along with her brother, Robin Paton) were founding members of the Bruny Island Historical Society. The family’s farming diaries, early account books and weather records now form part of the Australian Bicentennial Historical Records Register.

Josephine was a substantial benefactor towards the community purchase of the Bruny Island Chapel & Cemetery from the Anglican Church in May 2015 thus enabling this facility to remain in community hands for perpetuity.

Josephine’s legacy to society will continue long after her passing. Through her Will she donated a substantial portion of her estate to liver cancer research. To realise her wish her Executors negotiated with the Menzies Institute for Medical Research and this has resulted in the establishment of

“The Sefton Bottomley Liver Cancer Bequest”.

This pioneering research is expected to reap benefits not only in Tasmania but also in Australia and even world-wide.

Josephine was a woman of integrity, loyalty, and courage. She always led by example and was loved and respected by all who knew her.

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