

[Home](#) » [Obituaries](#) » Article

## Student of the breath of life

September 19, 2006

### Diana Temple, 1925-2006

DIANA TEMPLE was 17 when she started work during World War II as a laboratory assistant at Western Australia's Great Boulder mine. By the time she retired in 1990 she had published 100 scientific papers, delivered keynote speeches at 60 conferences, had become associate professor at Sydney University's Pharmacology Department and founded the Women in Science Enquiry Network, enabling thousands of women to follow in her scientific footsteps.

In 1999 Temple, who has died from a lung disease, was appointed a member of the Order of Australia, "for service to medical and scientific research, particularly in the field of respiratory pharmacology; as an advocate for the role of women in science; and in promoting an understanding of science by the general public".

Diana Marmion was born in Kalgoorlie where she attended East Kalgoorlie School and matriculated in chemistry before gaining a bachelor of science from the University of Western Australia in 1947, an unusual choice for a woman in those years.

Despite her love of the West Australian outback, in 1949, aged 22, she started teaching chemistry at Sydney University before taking a research job at Harwell Research Institute in Oxford, where she married a fellow scientist, Dr Richard Temple.

After working in the US for several years she returned to Australia with her husband and gained a PhD in chemistry at the University of Sydney in 1962. She took up lecturing in pharmacology at the university and also started a family.

In the mid-1970s she joined a group of women studying the role and achievements of female academics, the findings of which were published in 1983 in a book, *Why So Few?* In 1976 Temple was appointed associate professor in the department of pharmacology, heading the department until 1979. She also became a member of the academic board.



Energetic ... Diana Temple led by example in promoting women in science.

While in the department, her research interests were primarily in respiratory pharmacology; she nurtured a specialist research team in this field. As a result, respiratory research at the University of Sydney prospered and is now a research strength of the faculty.

It was during this time Temple published 100 scientific papers, mainly in the field of respiratory pharmacology. She also supervised 41 research students.

She was a fellow of the university senate from 1985 to 1987 and an elected member of the academic board from 1976 to 1989 before she retired in 1990, when she was made an honorary associate of the department of pharmacology. In 1995 she was made a life member of the faculty of medicine, and a life member of the Australasian Society for Clinical and Experimental Pharmacologists and Toxicologists.

She also worked with the Australian & New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (ANZAAS), as member of the national council from 1979 to 1985, then 1992 to 1994, and as general secretary from 1979 to 1985, helping administer the Eureka Prizes for many years. She also served on the NSW Privacy Commission.

Believing professional women needed to align with like-minded women confronting the same challenges in establishing and maintaining their careers, Temple helped establish the Women in Science Enquiry Network (WISENet) at ANZAAS in 1984.

She was listed as a founding member of the link team on the back of the first issue of the *WISENet Journal* of April 1985, and through to May 2003.

She also served as the WISENet national convener for 10 years and promoted the journal as the most important tentacle, disseminating the message of WISENet to people who were never able to attend meetings. WISENet and the *WISENet Journal* are Temple's monuments, as they continue their role in forwarding women's participation in science.

Temple led by example, achieving distinction in her professional life, maintaining a loving family structure. She also cultivated a wide range of interests. She was an avid bushwalker, loved boating, and frequented the ballet, opera and exhibitions. But whether it was literary discussion, National Trust outings or acting as honorary attendant in the Sydney University's art gallery after her retirement, she brought to it the same uplifting, loving, generous persona.

A woman of boundless energy for most of her life, with a keen interest in people, especially those in science, Temple was respected by all who knew her, and her support and encouragement to many women and men whose lives she touched will leave a broad and lasting legacy. For generations of people she was a mentor and role model of great consequence.

She is survived by her husband, Richard, her children, Helen and Jonathan, and grandchildren, Charlotte and Nicholas.

## **Helen Temple Berry, with Dr Jocelyn O'Neil, Professor Graham Johnston and Heather Rossiter**

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