

KATHLEEN WATSON

Kathleen Nance Watson was born in Melbourne, Victoria, on 10 March 1927, the daughter of T.A.A. Watson and K.Watson, nee MacDonald. She was educated at Coburg High School and MacRobertson Girls' High School, and gained a Bachelor of Arts, a Diploma of Education (1945-1948) and a Bachelor of Education (1954) from the University of Melbourne.

Kath Watson taught for forty years in Victorian State High Schools. In 1964 she taught for one term at the Walworth Comprehensive School in London. In 1970, she became one of the first women principals of co-educational secondary schools in Victoria, serving as Principal of Collingwood High School till 1975 and, from 1976 – 1986, as Principal of Mitcham High School. She has also served as a member of the Melbourne State College Council from 1979-1988, and of the Swinburne University of Technology Council from 1992-2004.

Her concern for children has led her into community service, as Chairperson and then board Member of the David Burgess Foundation from 1991-2006, and as Board Member and President of the Association for the Severely Handicapped (Inc) during the 1990's.

Recognising Kath's continuing long association with Swinburne University of Technology, the Kath Watson Scholarship for Women was set up in 2010, to enable disadvantaged women whose tertiary education had been interrupted to resume their studies at Swinburne. Since then, the scholarship has assisted five worthy women. Currently (in 2015), there are two women studying full time under this scholarship, which is now included on Swinburne's web site.

In 2011, Kath Watson was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Swinburne, and in 2013 she was listed on the Victorian Honour Roll for Women.

Kath Watson is remembered as a pioneer in the parent-teacher movement and in the introduction of counselling services in State Secondary Schools, and one of the first women Principals in co-educational high schools. She was awarded an AM in 1987 for services to education.