

Dr Jean Jackson

30 December 1913 to 29 March 2012

Nancy Millis, sister to Jean Jackson and long time member of Graduate Women Victoria wrote this article "to record just something of Jean Jackson's life, her joy in living and working as a biochemist and pioneer in the then poorly regarded area of medical science, nutrition and dietetics."

Having won a scholarship for her secondary education in a Melbourne grammar school, she entered University of Melbourne. She graduated in 1934 from the Science Faculty with BSc and won the Exhibition in Biochemistry.

In 1935, she appointed as Lecturer at Melbourne University and later as Senior Lecturer in Biochemistry where she taught science, medical and dental students. She developed a major interest in dietetics – then a much neglected subject – and designed the first course leading to a BSc (Dietetics). She was a prime mover in establishing the Dietetics Association in Victoria. Her research in this field won her a British Council Scholarship to Cambridge in 1944 – her journey of 8 weeks on a cargo ship was via the Panama Canal and across the Atlantic in a convoy. She was in London for VE day and in Aberdeen for VJ day – unforgettable days for her.

In 1950 she was appointed Senior Lecturer in charge of Nutrition at the University of Malaya in Singapore. She taught medical, dental and social studies students but much of her time was spent on research into the influence of nutrition on the development of infants in three major ethnic groups in Singapore (Chinese, Malaysian, Indian) especially those of low socio-economic status. This information was useful in directing government programs to improve the nutrition of infants.

When Jean retired from Singapore in 1960 she returned to Melbourne where she demonstrated in Biochemistry at Melbourne and Monash to medical students. However, her knowledge of the nutritional scene in the Far East led WHO to employ her as a consultant to their Applied Nutrition Program.

In 1973 she was a consultant to the World Bank for their nutritional work in Indonesia. She was a member of that government's committee developing the rationing program for the population, for orphanages, homes for the elderly, hospitals and prisons. She was also concerned in developing Food Standards and establishing standards for the scales used in the supply of food.

From such a busy and demanding academic life and her part in developing policy and regulations regarding nutrition and food supplies you might think there was no time for anything else. She loved ship travel and went round the world many times as a passenger in freighters, container ships etc, often the sole passenger or one of two or three. She was an excellent sailor the weather, winds or gales did not faze her at all. She played an excellent game of bridge and had a wide circle of friends at her Bridge Club who enjoyed her sense of humour and of the ridiculous, which she shared with her husband, Jack (an organic chemist, originally from Yorkshire).

She was mentally as sharp as a tack until her death at the age of 98, and would be very chuffed that GWV have named a bursary for her, as Jean was a very early member of the Victorian Women Graduates Association (as it was then called) and greatly favoured the

work that the Association does in providing scholarships and in encouraging the application of science to society.

In June 2011, the Jean Jackson Bursary was awarded to Alisha McLauchlan, a student at the University of Melbourne

Graduate Women Victoria