

Obituary

Barbara Archer

On 27 April 1992 the archival community in Queensland lost a valued friend and colleague with the death from cancer of Barbara Archer. Barbara began her career as an archivist at Queensland State Archives in July 1974. Like many archivists of that era, her formal qualifications were in the library rather than the archival field. In 1975 she completed the Registration Certificate of the Library Association of Australia. During the time she worked at State Archives she undertook the full range of an archivist's duties, including reference work, arrangement and description and appraisal. She also served as Acting Assistant State Archivist for most of 1976.

In June 1979, she transferred to a position with the John Oxley Library where she remained until she retired on 3 February 1986. At the John Oxley Library she was in charge of their holdings of manuscripts and private archives. Her duties included arrangement and description of holdings and assisting with public access to them.

After her 'retirement' she took up archives consultancy work and was in fact busier than ever. Amongst others, she undertook projects for the Royal Geographical Society and the Dental Association. An initial six months contract as part time archivist with the Performing Arts Centre was extended for several years and she remained there until illness forced her to relinquish the position. She was also actively involved with the Queensland Branch of the Australian Society of Archivists and took a keen interest in all issues of concern to the archival community.

A highly intelligent person with wide ranging interests, Barbara was always keen to learn something new. Her academic career included a Bachelor of Agricultural Science, a Master of Arts with a thesis on Burmese history and substantial work towards a PhD in Indian History. She was also a frequent traveller in Asia and Europe with a network of friends all over the world. Shortly before becoming ill, Barbara and her husband Fred had completed an extensive trip from Japan via the trans-Siberian Railway and across Europe.

Barbara had an abiding interest in classical music and had worked as a music teacher for many years before taking up archival work. She

continued to be involved in musical life and frequently attended chamber music concerts and other musical and ballet performances. Her strong commitment to the environment and the plants and animals in it was well known. She had organized a number of environmental fairs to raise awareness as well as funds for conservation issues. She had a love of all animals and she and her husband shared their home at Tamborine with numerous dogs, cats, ducks, geese and donkeys as well as encouraging the presence of native birds and wildlife.

In her own quiet way Barbara was a person of strongly held convictions and great personal integrity. Her intelligence and her compassion were highly valued by those of us who had the privilege of working with her. As a friend and as a colleague, she will be greatly missed.

Lee McGregor