

Vol 3

VICTORIAN HONOUR ROLL OF WOMEN

2003

*Ruth Austin
Nina Bassat
Gracia Baylor,
AM*

*The Hon
Justice Sally
Brown*

*Fanny
Brownbill*

*Marg D'Arcy
Linda Fenton*

*The Hon
Caroline Hogg*

*Parvava Athanasiou-
Joannou*

Betty Lawson (Stevenson)

*Professor Nancy Millis, AC,
MBE*

*Brenda Murray, OAM
(Bich) Cam Nguyen*

Thelma Prior

Professor Dimity Reed

Jodie Ryan

Jill Smith

Mavis Taylor

Katherine Teh - White

Margaret Wirrpunda

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ISBN 0 7311 1457 4

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INTRODUCTION



I am delighted to present the stories of the 20 remarkable women who have been added to the *Victorian Honour Roll of Women* in 2003.

The inaugural Honour Roll, launched in 2001 as part of Victoria's Centenary of Federation *Women Shaping the Nation* event, recognised the contributions of women from all walks of life.

Again this year, we illustrate the diversity of Victorian women, their skills, strengths, determination and courage.

They come from many sections of the community, representing the arts, women's and children's health, government, community, the law and social justice.

They are women who have contributed significantly not only to the growth of the Victorian community generally, but also to bettering the lives of other women, both at home in their own communities as well as overseas.

Their generosity of spirit, their ingenuity and their dedication have marked them for special mention.

The Victorian Government is committed to honouring the role of women through the on going initiative of the *Victorian Honour Roll of Women*. It is a tribute not only to those who have been named, but to women everywhere and the contributions they make every day of their lives.

HON MARY DELAHUNTY, MP
Minister for Women's Affairs

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RUTH AUSTIN

INFANT WELFARE SISTER

For 28 years, Ruth Austin was an Infant Welfare Sister for the North-East Victorian townships of Bright, Myrtleford and Mt Beauty. In that time she cared for more than 7000 newborn babies, many children of newly arrived migrants. Her support and care for mothers and their babies was invaluable.

Born in Leongatha in Gippsland in 1922, Ruth trained as a nurse at Prince Henry's Hospital in Melbourne during World War II. She then went to Sydney to the King George VI Hospital to complete her obstetrics qualification.

After the war, Ruth went to New Zealand where there was a shortage of trained nurses and worked in several provincial hospitals.

In 1953, Ruth and her twin sister Mary sailed to England and for the next two years they both nursed in the UK and in Montreal, Canada.

Back home, Ruth completed her infant welfare training on a bursary at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Mothers and Babies in Carlton. In return for the bursary, she had to work for one year and the options were either Cranbourne in Melbourne's outer-east or Bright in north-east Victoria.

Ruth chose Bright in the Alpine Shire. Initially, she worked in temporary facilities at the Mt Beauty Medical Centre and later at the Guide Hall before a permanent Infant Welfare Centre was built in the town in 1964. New centres were also opened in Myrtleford in 1959 and Bright in 1964. The Shire's community grew with the arrival of migrant workers for the Kiewa Hydro Electricity Scheme and the tobacco farms around Myrtleford.

Ruth travelled extensively throughout the Shire, operating weekly clinics in three townships. Many mothers spoke little or no English and Ruth was always supportive and responsive to their needs and made many house calls.

During her nearly three decades of service, hearing tests were introduced and immunisation became widespread. She imparted new ideas and knowledge into the community, including the introduction of the contraceptive pill for women.

Ruth was concerned about the lack of community facilities for old and frail people and helped to instigate the Community Welfare Association, which was instrumental in providing meals-on-wheels. She also helped to establish the Senior Citizens Club rooms in Bright.



Sister Ruth Austin made a lasting contribution to the women, children and families of the Alpine Shire community.

In a small rural community like the North-East Alpine area, someone like Ruth is an inspiration and a life force.

"I've had a sense of satisfaction and pride in infant welfare service in three towns and their surrounding areas," she says.

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NINA BASSAT

JEWISH LEADER

Nina Bassat is a prominent leader in Victoria's Jewish community. She was the first woman to head the Jewish Community Council of Victoria and the second woman to be President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry.

Born in Lwow, Poland in 1939, Nina and her mother survived the Holocaust and came to Australia in 1949 as refugees after two years in a displaced person's camp in Germany. They settled in Melbourne.

Nina studied arts and law at the University of Melbourne, married and had three children. In 1980 she started her own legal practice.

For 20 years Nina has been on the National Council of Jewish Women Victoria and served as its Vice-President from 1984-1995.

As head of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria in 1996, she initiated the Taskforce for Jews from the former Soviet Union, established the Demography Committee, which produced the current demographic study of the Jewish community in Victoria, and set up Noar, a youth group for dealing with the problem of street parties.

Since the mid 1980s Nina has also been on the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia and has chaired the Constitution Committee, the Overseas Jewry Committee and the Anti Semitism and Racism Committee.

She is on the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the official elected organisation and authority of the Australian Jewish Community, serving as its second woman President from 1998-2001.

As President, Nina set up the National Restitution hotline to deal with all restitution enquiries and facilitated restitution claims. She led a leadership mission to Israel in January 2000.

In 2002, Nina was invited to be a board member of the Monash University Centre for Jewish Civilisation Foundation.

In 2001, Nina was made the honorary patron of the 16th Maccabean Team in recognition of her 'outstanding contribution in assisting victims of the bridge tragedy at the XV Maccabiah in Israel in July 1997'.

In 2000, the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia presented her with the Woman of Achievement Award.

Nina is very low key and self-effacing about her achievements and leadership roles.

"The fact is that 1.5 million Jewish children died in the Holocaust. Those that are left have had to assume some level of responsibility.

"People have asked me to become involved and do things and really there aren't a lot of us to turn to, I just couldn't say no."



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GRACIA BAYLOR, AM

WOMEN'S AFFAIRS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, VICTORIAN MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Gracia Baylor was the first woman President of the Shire of Healesville now Yarra Ranges Shire Council and one of the first two women to be elected to the Victorian Legislative Council. She has played a leading role in the Victorian and Australian National Council of Women, helped to establish the Queen Victoria Women's Centre and has been involved with many issues facing women.

Gracia Baylor was born in Brisbane in 1931. During the war her father was in the air force so the family moved to Victoria and they also spent some time in Hobart.

In 1950 she completed a Diploma of Fine Arts at the National Gallery Arts School in Melbourne and afterwards did a teacher training course. Gracia taught at secondary schools and after marrying, worked as a law clerk and manager of one of her husband's three law practices.

Gracia developed her interest in local politics from her concern for the need for a kindergarten in Healesville where she lived and worked. She was elected to the Healesville Shire council in 1966 and

served as Shire President from 1977-78. At the time she was the first female Shire President in Victoria.

From 1973-76, she was President of the Australian Local Government Women's Association and actively supported and encouraged women to stand for local government.

In March 1979 she was one of the first two women to be elected to the Victorian Legislative Council as the member for Boronia. Gracia resigned from this seat in 1985 to contest the lower house seat of Warrandyte, but was unsuccessful.

As an MP, Gracia was instrumental in helping to save the main building on the Queen Victoria Hospital site by persuading fellow Upper House colleagues to block legislation to sell this piece of Crown land to developers. The building became the Queen Victoria Women's Centre (QVWC), a focal point of reference for women to access services and facilities. In 1995, she became a Trustee of the QVWC.

For many years, Gracia has been an active leader of women's organisations, including President of the National Council of Women (NCW) of Victoria 1990-93 and President of NCW Australia 1997-2000.

She has helped to prepare many submissions to government on issues concerning women's health, migration, education, nutrition and environment.



In 1999, Gracia was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in recognition of her services to Parliament and women's affairs. She is a member of two Federal Government Advisory Committees.

As a mature age student, Gracia went back to study and in 1992 gained a Bachelor of Arts from Deakin University.

Gracia firmly believes that women should have equal status to men.

"I've always believed in equality ... that women should have equal opportunity to share in the decision-making processes of the nation at any level, whether it be parliamentary, corporate, or at the local level."

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THE HON JUSTICE SALLY BROWN

FIRST WOMAN CHIEF MAGISTRATE OF VICTORIA AND FAMILY COURT JUDGE

As Chief Magistrate, Sally Brown was the first woman to head a Victorian Court and subsequently she was appointed a Judge of the Family Court of Australia.

Her particular concerns are juvenile justice issues, reform of the law relating to sexual assault and domestic violence and judicial education.

Born in Melbourne in 1950, Sally Brown was school captain of Mac Robertson Girls' High School and went on to the University of Melbourne to study law and arts.

After completing her articles, she worked as a solicitor, lectured in law, started her own legal practice and became a barrister.

In 1985 she was appointed a Magistrate in Victoria, then Deputy Chief Magistrate in 1987 before becoming Chief Magistrate in 1990.

Justice Brown was appointed a Judge of the Family Court of Australia in 1993. In 2001 she was made the Administrative Judge of the Family Court for Victoria and Tasmania.

Throughout her career, Justice Brown has been committed to reforming the law relating to family violence and is Chair of the Victorian Family Violence Protocols Committee.

She has been responsible for a number of significant judicial education initiatives within the Family Court, including the Gender and Judicial Awareness Conference in 1994, the Equality and Justice Conference in 1995, the Violence Conference in 1996, two Aboriginal Awareness Conferences and the development and delivery of the first three national judicial orientation programs conducted by the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration (AIJA).

Justice Brown is a member of a number of Boards and Committees including the Board of Management of the Australian Drug Foundation, Patron of the Queen Victoria Women's Centre Shilling Fund and she is on the Advisory Board of the Graduate Diploma in Dispute Resolution and Judicial Administration at the University of Melbourne.

Justice Brown has been invited to present at several international conferences and in recognition of her services, the AIJA has made her an Honorary Life Member.

Justice Brown has made a significant contribution to the practice of law and is held in high esteem by her peers. She has worked to break down the barriers to equal participation in the law and to work towards a more open and inclusive system of justice and has been at the forefront of judicial education on social issues, particularly those relating to gender.



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FANNY BROWNBILL

VICTORIA'S FIRST WOMAN LABOR MP

Fanny Brownbill held the Legislative Assembly seat of Geelong for 10 years from 1938 until her death in 1948. At the time, she was only the second Labor woman to be elected to a State Parliament in Australia.

In Parliamentary debates, Fanny raised many issues relating to the rights of women, children and family. Her inaugural speech to Parliament on 20 July 1938 was against the ban on perambulators on suburban trains in Melbourne.

Fanny was also a tireless worker for the Geelong community.

Fanny was born at Modewarre near Geelong in 1890 and was educated at local state schools. Her marriage to Bill Brownbill in 1920 marked the start of her long association with the Australian Labor Party. Bill was the Member for Geelong for a total of 15 years, first from 1920 to 1932 and then from 1935 to 1938, when he died in office. Fanny decided to stand for his seat in the resultant by-election.

Fanny won the seat of Geelong in 1938 by more than 2000 votes despite stiff opposition, including a call by the then Federal Treasurer, Richard Casey, that parliament was no place for a woman.

She went on to hold the seat at the next four elections, sometimes unopposed - a testament to her popularity with the local electorate.

As a committee member of the Old Folks Home and through her long association and work with the Geelong and District Ladies' Benevolent Association, she gave considerable support to elderly members of the Geelong community. She worked hard to assist elderly and deserving people to obtain the old-age pension.

Fanny was President of the Matthew Flinders Girls' School Council and the Geelong and Western District Orphanage Ladies Auxiliary and a member of the Geelong Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).

In addition to her parliamentary duties and community work, Fanny was a Justice of the Peace.

The Geelong City Council named a ward after Fanny Brownbill in commemoration of her contribution to Geelong and in honour of her achievements as a woman in Victorian Parliament.

When Fanny died, she was the only female Member of Parliament in Victoria. At her funeral, thousands of people lined the streets of Geelong as a mark of respect.



The Acting Leader of the Opposition at the time of Fanny's death, Mr L W Galvin MP, said that Fanny exemplified the Christian approach to politics.

"Victoria will be the poorer for her passing," he said. "Women in particular have lost an advocate to whom they indeed owe much."

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MARG D'ARCY

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

For the past 20 years Marg D'Arcy has worked to develop and implement new and improved policies and methods of supporting and assisting women, while at the same time empowering women who have been abused by men.

Born in the western district town of Hamilton in 1950, Marg moved to Melbourne with her family as a teenager and left school at 16. In her late 20s, she did a Bachelor of Arts at Latrobe University and became interested in feminist politics.

In 1981, Marg started work at Southern Halfway House, a women's refuge in metropolitan Melbourne. The experience opened her eyes to the horrific violence and harassment that some men perpetrate on a daily basis against women.

Marg has been responsible for a huge variety of projects and actions that have set the agenda in the continuing struggle to reduce violence against women.

Marg was the coordinator of the Southern Halfway House collective for two and half years. She then conducted an evaluation of Victorian women's refuges for the Victorian Women's Refuge Action Group and coordinated the Women's Emergency Services Program for the Department of Community Welfare.

Victoria Police employed Marg as Coordinator of the Family Violence Project Office from 1988 until 1991 where she developed policy and provided strategic advice regarding the role of police in family violence.

From 1991-93, she was the Women's Policy Officer for the Office of Corrections.

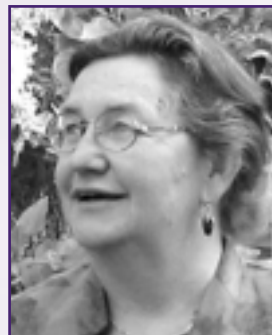
For four years (1993-97) Marg worked for the Victorian Community Council Against Violence during which time stalking legislation was introduced.

In 1998, Marg was a research officer at the Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA House) at the Royal Women's Hospital where she managed the Sexual Assault Incidence and Prevalence Project.

Marg is currently Senior Program Manager, Royal Women's Hospital with responsibility for the management of CASA House and the statewide, after hours Sexual Assault Crisis Line. The services provide telephone counselling, support, information and advocacy, 24-hour crisis care and ongoing counselling, support and advocacy for women and men following sexual assault.

Until November 2002 she was convenor of the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence and a member of the board of the National Women's Justice Coalition.

"My commitment is to work towards a world where women can exercise their right to live free from fear of violence, whether it is as victims of war and torture or whether it is in their homes or workplaces."



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LINDA FENTON

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY LEADER AND MENTOR FOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Linda Fenton was a great inspiration for the women of the Wamba Wamba people, many of whom suffered drug and alcohol, domestic violence and social isolation problems.

Through her efforts to establish the Wamba Dagz sewing group, Linda developed and created a social, educational and cultural program for the Wamba Wamba women, giving them skills and helping them to take control of their lives.

She was also influential in the Wamba Wamba people's development of a market garden and a commercial hydroponic facility, enabling the community to become self-sufficient. Both enterprises provided important employment and educational opportunities.

Linda Fenton was born in 1956 in Swan Hill, where she went to school until Year 10. At primary school Linda learnt ballet dancing and gave many performances, then at high school she became a committed Christian. After leaving school she attended the Gnowangerup Bible College in Western Australia and returned

to Swan Hill to teach Sunday school. She started up the Mirranjippa Dance Group and taught Dreamtime dancing and ballet dancing to local children and was also a pre-school teacher. She married her husband Geoff in 1981, who was a Salvation Army pastor. They had three daughters.

In the late 1980s she became involved with the Wamba Wamba Aboriginal Land Council, which occupies 40 acres of traditional land on the banks of the Murray River near Swan Hill on the NSW side of the river border and in 1993 was elected Chairperson.

Linda Fenton worked constantly to improve the welfare and the confidence of the Wamba Wamba people.

As Chairperson of the Land Council, she helped to establish two important and successful initiatives for the Wamba Wamba people.

In 1992, Linda applied to ATSIC for a grant of \$6000 to purchase sewing machines and materials and to employ a sewing teacher. Starting out in a tin shed at the back of a house, the Wamba Dagz sewing group has over the years operated successful street stalls selling their clothing, arts and crafts and is now a profitable small business enterprise.

In mid 1995, under Linda's leadership, the Wamba Wamba Aboriginal Land Council built upon its successful 13-acre market garden and established a hydroponic facility that has become a role model for other Aboriginal Land Councils.

The Wamba Wamba people lost an important community leader when Linda died in February 2000. She is greatly missed by her people.

In particular, Linda was an inspiration for the women of the Wamba Wamba. The sewing group is growing into a clothing business, giving the women confidence and self-esteem. They now have a goal to achieve in business thanks to Linda's support and vision.

Linda planted the seed for the Wamba Wamba women to bloom.

2003

THE HON CAROLINE HOGG

VICTORIAN MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND SUPPORTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

Caroline Hogg had a noted parliamentary career for 17 years. She championed a range of social justice initiatives and was committed to community development. Since retiring from Parliament in 1999, she has continued this commitment through a range of voluntary positions.

Born in Somerset in England in 1942, Caroline and her Australian-born mother moved to Australia in 1950. She went to school and university in Adelaide, later moving to Melbourne, where she taught at Fitzroy High School for 15 years.

Caroline's interest in politics was kindled in the turbulent 1960s, when she became actively involved in demonstrations against the Vietnam War and capital punishment. She joined the Australian Labor Party in 1966.

For nine years from 1970 to 1979 she was a councillor at the City of Collingwood and its first woman mayor in 1978-79.

In 1982, Caroline stood for the Victorian Parliamentary seat of Melbourne North and was successfully elected and went on to become Victorian Labor's longest serving woman MP.

In 1985, she was sworn in as Minister for Community Services in the Cain Government and held that ministry until 1987, when she moved to head the Education portfolio.

In 1988, Caroline became Minister for Ethnic Affairs. For two years from 1989

until 1991, she was Minister for Health. During that time, she worked to ensure that Victoria had one of the best prevention and support programs in Australia for people with HIV.

She took on the demanding role of Minister for Ethnic, Municipal and Community Affairs in January 1991 and held the portfolio until the change of Government in 1992, when Labor moved into Opposition.

From 1990-96 she was the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party in the Legislative Council.

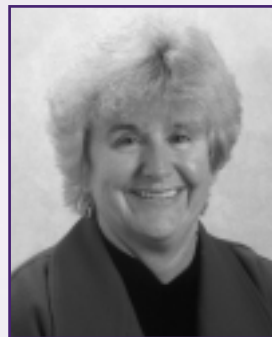
Caroline then held various Shadow Ministerial positions when in Opposition and was the ALP Whip in the Legislative Council, when she retired in 1999.

In addition, Caroline made major contributions to a range of Parliamentary and Cabinet committees, including the Social Development Committee of Cabinet and the Rural Affairs Committee of Cabinet.

Throughout her political career, Caroline made many friends in the women's community, including women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and was well loved and respected in the neighbourhood house and rural women's networks.

Since her retirement she has chaired the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women's Health and Wellbeing and since July 2000 has been on the Board of beyondblue, the National Depression Initiative.

"My commitment to public life was underpinned by a very strong desire to make life better and fairer for people," says Caroline.



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VARVARA ATHANASIOU-IOANNOU

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSULTANT PROMOTING A CLIMATE OF INCLUSIVENESS

Since her arrival in Australia 30 years ago, Varvara Athanasiou-Ioannou has been instrumental in the evolution of multicultural policy and has worked towards changing the policy of assimilation to inclusiveness. She is committed to social justice and human rights for migrant women refugees and other disadvantaged groups.

Born in Greece in 1953, Varvara immigrated to Australia when she was 19. She initially did a teaching diploma, then completed a Bachelor of Education at La Trobe University and started a Masters in Education.

Varvara has a combined educational, consultancy and human resources background. She has worked extensively in the field of curriculum development, including writing, initiating and implementing policy for the Victorian Education Department dealing with cultural change in schools introducing language other than English (LOTE) frameworks.

She worked with the Ethnic Education Services division of the Education Department and wrote national curriculum

on teaching Greek from prep to Year 8. This was later translated into 16 other languages.

In the mid 1980s, she taught and implemented a new curriculum across the Coburg West Primary School.

Varvara has held senior consultancy and human resource management roles with Ericsson Australia and Australia Post. Most recently she has been running Australia Post's Get A Balanced Life Program and the Women's Information Network (WIN). She has also been a sessional lecturer at Swinburne University of Technology in the Bachelor of Business program.

In 1996 Varvara was nominated by the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria to represent women of Greek background from Oceania at the International Conference held in Greece by the World Council of Hellenes Abroad.

In 1999 she was elected to the 11-member board of the World Committee for Hellenic Women Abroad.

Through the Cultural Association of Hellenic Women of Victoria, Varvara has been the founder of a unique and dynamic, non-profit initiative called 'Food For Thought Network' - a women's network with a developmental focus in the areas of work, family, language, culture, health and wellbeing.



She was also on the Board of the RMIT University Course Advisory Committee for Logistics and Transport for three years.

Varvara's work is based on diversity principles of inclusiveness for everyone. She creates opportunities and actively removes barriers to allow people to succeed and is enormously energetic and dedicated. Varvara is a positive role model and mentor for many women, not just within the Greek community.

She has a passion for wanting to make a difference in the world.

BETTY LAWSON (STEVENSON)

FIRST WOMAN PRESIDENT OF THE TECHNICAL TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

Betty Lawson (formerly Stevenson) helped to form the Technical Teachers Association of Victoria (TTAV) in 1967 and in 1968 was elected its first woman president. She was the first woman principal of a co-educational technical school.

Born in Melbourne in 1920, Betty started her teaching career in 1938 as a student teacher at the Ellinbank state school in Gippsland. She completed her Trained Primary Teachers' Certificate in 1940 and later earned a Commerce degree from the University of Melbourne whilst teaching and also raising three children.

Betty joined the Victorian Teachers Union (VTU) in the late 1950s and joined the Council in 1961 as a representative of Metropolitan Technical Women. At the time she was a Class II Assistant at Sandringham Technical School. Prior to that she taught at Box Hill Girls' Technical School.

In 1969 Betty was unsuccessful in her application for the position of principal at a co-educational technical school. She was refused the right to appeal on the grounds that the position was not advertised for women applicants. With the assistance of the TTAV, her right to appeal was upheld, a battle ensued and in the following year she finally won

the position of principal of the Sunshine North Technical School. This opened up the system for other women.

In 1967, Betty was one of a group of technical teacher members who perceived a lack of representation in the VTU. They formed the Technical Teachers Association of Victoria.

Betty served on the 1967 Interim Council as Vice President and the following year, she stood uncontested for the President's office. She was the first woman President of the TTAV and only its second President. Betty chose not to renominate the following year, but served on the TTAV Council for the next four years. Betty was also President of the national body, the Technical Teachers Association of Australia.

In 1974, Betty was awarded life membership of the TTAV in recognition of her executive roles and contribution to the national organisation. She was the first woman member to be honoured life membership and was one of only seven people in ten years to receive the honour.

Betty retired from teaching in 1975.

When Betty was awarded life membership of the TTAV, she was commended for her leadership in many matters, particularly concerning women technical teachers.

She says her goal was to achieve equality and justice for women teachers and in the late 1960s she was involved with the campaign for equal pay for women in the workplace.



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PROFESSOR NANCY MILLIS, AC, MBE

PIONEER IN THE STUDY OF BIOTECHNOLOGY IN AUSTRALIA

The contributions that Professor Nancy Millis has made to agriculture, protection of the environment, science, medicine and engineering have been immense. Without her leadership, genetic engineering would not have flourished in Australia.

Born in the Melbourne suburb of Brighton in 1922, Nancy Millis was the fifth of six children, whose enlightened parents made sure the family was well educated even during the Depression.

Her father's ill health meant Nancy had to leave school at 16, but she went to night school and matriculated and then studied Agricultural Science at the University of Melbourne.

In 1948 she went to England to obtain her PhD at the University of Bristol and did her thesis on the fermentation of cider, her introduction to industrial process technology.

On her return to Australia she was appointed Lecturer in the Microbiology Department at the University of Melbourne and a Professor in 1982.

Nancy's main leadership has been in the introduction of genetic engineering to the fledgling field of biotechnology in Australia. The first course in biotechnology at the University of Melbourne was taught by Nancy to chemical engineering students.

From 1980 to 2000, she chaired the Federal Government's genetic engineering surveillance committees (RDMC and GMAC), which set up guidelines that have become models for most of the South-East Asian region.

Nancy Millis is also a leader in the environmental management field. She was aware early of the importance of the purity of water and one of her main projects was the development of techniques to treat excess or wastewater after industrial use.

Professor Millis has served on a wide range of committees and boards. Her integrity, persistence, forthrightness and the ability to collaborate with others to achieve a successful outcome are some of her outstanding characteristics. She has great skill in determining the path science should take and leads others to follow.

In 1992, Professor Millis was appointed the first woman Chancellor of La Trobe University. She was Chair of the Victorian Government's Water Strategy Committee that advised on the supply and use of water for the Melbourne area.



In 1977, she became a Member of the British Empire (MBE) and in 1990 was made a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC). In 2002, Nancy and her work was honoured and recognised by being part of the Australia Post Legend Stamp series.

Nancy Millis is a person with the rare combination of having scientific knowledge, industrial application and the ability to liaise with political, business, educational and scientific workers not only in Australia, but worldwide.

Her knowledge and advice has been greatly appreciated by her many students over four decades of lecturing and PhD supervision.

VICTORIAN HONOUR ROLL OF WOMEN

2003

BRENDA MURRAY, OAM

DEDICATED COMMUNITY WORKER AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILLOR

Brenda Murray is recognised in her East Gippsland community has a tireless community worker, leader and instigator of many important initiatives.

Born in London in 1930, Brenda was evacuated from her Wimbledon home to Australia during World War II and lived in South Belgrave until the end of the war. Back in England, she completed school, but found it difficult to settle down and decided to return to Australia.

Brenda became a secondary school teacher, married and had three sons with her husband Keith. In 1960, they moved to Orbost where she taught and was headmistress of the Orbost Secondary College and became an active member of her community.

Brenda first became an elected local government councillor in 1971 for the Shire of Orbost, where she spent 17 years on the council including three terms as Shire President.

Brenda pulled together towns and communities heavily reliant on the timber industry for their economic well being. They formed a body called Timber Towns Victoria, which aimed to speak with a united, common voice and support the future of families whose livelihoods were dependent on the timber industry.

With the reintroduction of local council elections in Victoria in 1997, Brenda became Mayor of the newly formed East Gippsland Shire, encompassing five previous shires.

In 1979 Brenda was the founding chairperson of the Orbost Continuing Care Appeal, which raised money to build an aged persons facility for Orbost. She also worked to provide facilities for people with a disability, as the founding chairperson of the Merindah Day Training Centre now part of the Noweyung Centre.

In addition to her community welfare work, Brenda was the chairperson of the East Gippsland Economic Development and Employment Committee established in 1986-87, which aimed to identify ways to improve the prosperity of the region.

She was a commissioner of the Orbost Water Trust and Sewerage Authority from 1972 until 1980 and its chair from 1977-79, a period that oversaw the expansion of the water supply and provision of significant new sewerage services.

She has been a Justice of the Peace for more than 24 years and was an honorary probation officer at Orbost before being appointed as a JP.

In 1985, Brenda was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for services to the community. After the severe 1998 floods in East Gippsland, the Red Cross awarded Brenda the Red Cross Medal for Meritorious Services for her work as an emergency services liaison officer.

In her more than 40 years in East Gippsland, Brenda has been involved with many cultural, community and sporting groups and associations.

Brenda says she's been fortunate to have many wonderful opportunities after a tumultuous childhood. She hates to see injustice and compassion is what fires her up. "You have to do your best to put something back into life all the time."



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Thelma Prior
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Jodie Ryan
Jill Smith
Mavis Taylor

Katherine Teh - White
Margaret Wirrpunda

2003

(BICH) CAM NGUYEN

SUPPORTING VIETNAMESE AND OTHER MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES TO SETTLE IN VICTORIA

Cam Nguyen was instrumental in establishing the Australian Vietnamese Women's Welfare Association and developing a wide range of services for newly arrived migrants, principally from Vietnam, but also from Africa and other Asian countries.

The range of services offered critical support such as welfare, training, housing, media, research, sports, recreation, rehabilitation and employment.

Born in Vietnam in 1940, Cam arrived in Australia as a refugee in 1975 with her husband, Dr Nguyen Trieu Dan (previously Vietnam's Ambassador to Japan), and their four children, aged two to 11.

Cam completed a B.A. (Hons) degree at Cambridge University in 1962 and then a M.A. in 1966. She was fluent in English and French but had no work experience, so initially she worked as a clerk and an interpreter. Later Cam started teaching French to children and English to adult migrants.

She did a Diploma in Education and a Graduate Diploma in Educational Administration while teaching at the Adult Migrant Education Services (AMES), becoming principal at the AMES Centre in St Albans in 1986.

At AMES, Cam played a pivotal role in lobbying the Federal Government to construct a purpose built education centre for the very large and growing immigrant community in the St Albans area in 1990.

In the summer of 1982 Cam's concern for new arrivals from Vietnam led her to approach a number of Vietnamese professional women about forming a women's association dedicated to the welfare, settlement and integration of the Vietnamese community in Victoria.

The Australian Vietnamese Women's Welfare Association (AVA) was formed in early 1983 with Cam as the founder and inaugural president, a position she held for 16 of the next 20 years.

From 1995 to 1998, Cam took on the full-time paid role as executive director of AVA during which time core staff were recruited and trained and the AVA experienced a quantum leap in the range of services provided. Cam succeeded in establishing the AVA as an excellent not for profit organisation with professional staff providing high quality services and in the process making it the largest Vietnamese community organisation in Victoria. Since 1998 she has again been honorary AVA president.

Thanks to her thorough understanding of both cultures, Cam has been able to act as a bridge between the Vietnamese and Australian communities.



She has served on many committees including the Implementation Committee for the Establishment of the Independent & Multicultural Broadcasting Corporation (the precursor to SBS), the Victoria 150th Anniversary Committee, the Ethnic Communities Council and various committees and taskforces for the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission in the mid 1980s.

In 1986 the National Returned Servicemen's League (RSL) awarded Cam the Anzac of the Year for distinguished service to fellow Australians.

In 2002, she was made Ambassador by the City of Yarra for services to residents.

Cam embodies the values of generosity and inclusiveness. She works not just for the Vietnamese community, but for all Australians, particularly new arrivals from across the globe. Her vision is for a caring and harmonious Australian society.

VICTORIAN HONOUR ROLL OF WOMEN 2003

THELMA PRIOR

WOMEN'S RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER AND UNION SHOP STEWARD

Throughout her life, Thelma Prior has campaigned for the wellbeing of women, particularly factory workers.

At 14, she started work as an unskilled textile worker and continued to work in the industry for the next 47 years, campaigning for improved conditions.

Born in 1922 in Essendon, Thelma attended the local state school. She left in 1936 to start work at the Holeproof factory in Brunswick.

At the young age of 15, Thelma was elected a shop steward and began her fight for better conditions and better rights for all women workers.

In 1948, Thelma was sacked from her job at Hilton Hosiery for campaigning for an increase of 2/6d for junior wages. She moved to ICI Zips where she worked until her retirement in 1983.

As elected shop steward, she campaigned on issues such as childcare, special leave for women to care for sick children or carry out other family responsibilities and unpaid maternity leave.

She also addressed issues affecting the increasing number of migrant women workers and fought for English classes on the job because she realised how difficult it was for these women with the double demands of work and family to attend classes after work.

Thelma convinced ICI to offer the first-ever holiday care program for the children of factory workers.

Thelma attended the United Nations International Women's Conference in Mexico in 1975 and then went to the conference in Nairobi in 1985 where she met many valuable international contacts.

Thelma retired from paid work in 1983 and continued her union involvement by becoming a volunteer with the Union of Australian Women (UAW).

In the late 1980s, she was a member of the Victorian Women's Consultative Council and was involved with the campaign to save part of the Queen Victoria Hospital for Women.

Thelma has played an important part in her local community and helped to set up a community health centre in Doncaster and Templestowe. She has been vocal in highlighting and supporting environmental issues.

In 1991, Thelma was declared Manningham City Council's Citizen of the Year in recognition of her work and commitment.

Thelma is a quiet and steadfast activist whose tireless campaigning has made a great and lasting impact on everything she has been involved in.

She has a deep and abiding desire for world peace spurred on since she attended the United Nations World Peace Congress in Poland in 1950.



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Katherine Teh - White
Margaret Wirrpunda*

2003

PROFESSOR DIMITY REED

ARCHITECTURE, PUBLIC HOUSING AND URBAN DESIGN, WOMEN'S ISSUES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

For nearly 30 years, Dimity Reed has been involved with promoting the role of architecture, planning and urban studies. As Commissioner of Housing in the late 1970s and early 80s, Dimity offered new views and approaches to old problems in public housing.

She also has a long-standing commitment to women's issues and was a founding member of the Family Planning Association and the Childbirth Education Association.

Born in the New South Wales country town of Parkes in 1942, Dimity grew up in Melbourne. After her marriage ended she returned to study architecture as a mature-age student, juggling the demands of study and raising her three young children. She completed her Bachelor's degree at the University of Melbourne in 1976 and in 1999 gained a Masters in Architecture from RMIT.

From 1978-82, she was a Commissioner of Housing in Victoria and later became the Chief Executive Officer of the White Paper Secretariat on Public Housing in Victoria.

Dimity coordinated the Victorian pilot program and then the national Architecture

in Schools program, which aimed to establish an understanding of our built world as part of the primary school curriculum.

For four years she was Chairman of Directors of Archicentre, the home advisory division of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA), which provides advice to homebuyers and renovators.

In 1984, Dimity became the first woman President of a State Chapter of the RAIA. She has received numerous awards from the RAIA.

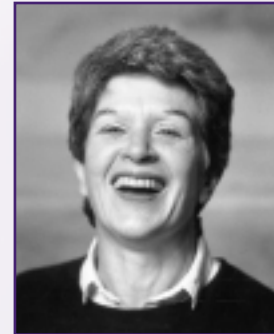
Throughout her career, Dimity has run her own architectural and urban design and planning practice.

In 1994, she was appointed Professor in Urban Design at RMIT University and since 2001 has been Adjunct Professor.

For five years she was a part-time Member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal's Planning Division and for nearly 20 years she has been the Chair or Member of panels hearing proposed amendments to local government planning schemes.

Dimity has also been active in local government as an elected Councillor with the City of St Kilda (1992-94) and as a Commissioner with the City of Moreland (1994-96) with particular interest in planning and development issues.

For many years, Dimity has worked towards improving the educational employment opportunities for young Victorian women.



For 22 years she was a Board Member of the YWCA and she is a Patron of the Queen Victoria Women's Centre. She was a co-founder of the Association of Women in Architecture that for some years provided support and encouragement to women working in architecture.

Dimity is the City of Melbourne's Ambassador for Architecture, a Trustee for the Shrine of Remembrance and a board member of the Urban & Regional Land Corporation and Zoos Victoria.

Dimity Reed has had a long-standing commitment to the roles that architecture, urban design and public housing serve in our society.

"How and what we build and how we share our resources around reveal our values as a society and the ideas that we engage with. They are the biography of our time that we give to our children, so they must be good," she says.

VICTORIAN HONOUR ROLL OF WOMEN 2003

JODIE RYAN

YOUNG INDIGENOUS LEADER

Jodie Ryan is a leader and role model for young Indigenous people across Ballarat and the Western Region of Victoria. She has represented Australian Indigenous people at a state, national and international level.

Jodie was born in Ballarat in 1975 and after completing her secondary schooling at Ballarat High School, she gained a Bachelor of Commerce at the University of Ballarat in 1999. She is currently completing the Certified Practising Accountants (CPA) program.

Whilst studying at the University of Ballarat, Jodie was employed as the Aboriginal Student Support and Recruitment Officer and during that period she successfully doubled the number of Indigenous students enrolled in higher education.

Jodie worked in the corporate business world as an accountant with Ernst & Young in Melbourne from 1999-2001.

Already at her young age Jodie has received many honours and awards. In 1999, Jodie received the NAIDOC (National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee) Victorian Aboriginal Young Achiever of the Year Award. The previous year, she was a finalist in the Koori section of the Victorian Outstanding Student of the Year awards for the TAFE sector.

Jodie's proudest achievement so far was in 2002, when she went to Geneva as the Australian youth representative to the

United National Work Group on Indigenous Populations. At this forum, she spoke on international standards setting for Indigenous people.

In 2002, Jodie was elected to the Tumbukka Regional Board of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Commission (ATSIC) with a record number of votes and in the same year she became a member of the University of Ballarat Council.

Whilst at the University of Ballarat, Jodie developed a six-day orientation and recruitment program aimed at introducing Aboriginal students to further education programs, which has been recognised by the Commonwealth Department for Education, Training and Youth Affairs as a best practice model.

Jodie is currently employed by the Victorian Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development as an Aboriginal Business Development Officer, where she assists Indigenous individuals and community organisations to develop business ideas and concepts.

To build on her skills, in 2002 she attended a leadership program at the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre in Darwin.

Jodie says she enjoys trying to make a difference to people's lives.

"In my role as an Aboriginal Student Support and Recruitment Officer, I could see how positive opportunities can make such a difference to communities. Working in business development is such a positive area: it's possible to make positive change for people to be more self-determined."



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2003

JILL SMITH

AUSTRALIAN THEATRE ADMINISTRATOR

For more than 20 years, Jill Smith has been involved with promoting the arts, contemporary themes and Australian playwrights through her work at the Playbox Theatre and with government and arts funding bodies.

Born in Melbourne in 1948, Jill Smith studied economics at Monash University and then completed a MBA at Monash and Bath Universities. Her career was initially in the banking and finance sector.

In 1979, Jill followed a personal passion and made the leap into arts administration, becoming General Manager of the Playbox Theatre Company in Melbourne.

When a fire devastated the Playbox building in Exhibition Street in Melbourne's central business district, the future of the theatre company looked bleak.

Jill set about the task of fundraising for a new contemporary theatre centre, at the same time maintaining the extensive touring and Melbourne seasons of Playbox.

Funds were raised, sponsorship secured and the historic malting plant in South Melbourne was purchased and converted. The CUB Malthouse Theatre Complex officially opened in 1990 - a long awaited dream for the company to have its own home was realised.

The opening plays typified the Playbox's approach to contemporary Australian theatre: *40 Lounge Café* by Greek-Australian writer Ted Lyssiotis and Robyn Archer's *Café Fledermaus* - a bold Australian look at European theatre. The opening season also included the premiere of renowned Australian playwright Hannie Rayson's *Hotel Sorrento*, which was subsequently made into a successful film.

Jill has supported and influenced the Playbox Theatre's policy of strong multi-culturalism with Timorese, Greek, Italian, Malaysian, Indonesian, Japanese, Koori, Vietnamese, Philippine and Chinese co-productions or themes extensively explored.

She has also played an important role in Australian theatre by mentoring many successful arts administrators who have worked with her at the Playbox.

In 1992 she helped instigate Melbourne's first Arts House, adjacent to the CUB Malthouse Complex, to house small arts companies.

In 2002 the Ngargee building opened providing a home for the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA) and Victoria's flagship contemporary dance company, Chunky Move, with set construction and storage facilities provided at the Playbox.

Jill has been a member of various state and federal government boards and committees including the Victorian Council of the Arts and the Theatre Board/Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council.



In 1995, Monash University recognised Jill's achievements and inspirational leadership with a Distinguished Alumni Award. The same year the Australia Council awarded her the inaugural (and only) Arts Administration Fellowship.

She is a Trustee of the Victorian Actors' Benevolent Trust, a Director of Stable Productions and a Member of the Rex Cramphorn Memorial Committee.

Jill Smith's vision and determination ensured the growth and survival of Australia's leading contemporary theatre - the Playbox. Thanks to her efforts Victoria has an outstanding arts complex for contemporary performance and visual art.

She has given a generation of young writers and artists wonderful new opportunities, both here and overseas.

VICTORIAN HONOUR ROLL OF WOMEN

2003

MAVIS TAYLOR

HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

After a life time of caring for her large family and community service work, at 86 years of age Mavis Taylor was moved to do something for the people of East Timor. Her work on the East Timor Project has given East Timorese women employment, hope and a sense of identity where previously there had been only heartache and despair.

Mavis was born in 1914 in the Melbourne suburb of Richmond and spent her childhood in rural Tasmania. Her family moved to Yarrawonga when she was 16. She married at a young age and had nine children.

Her husband suffered a debilitating stroke when he was 48 so Mavis took on the responsibility of helping to provide for them all. Her first retail foray was opening a café. She then ran a haberdashery store in Yarrawonga for more than 30 years.

Mavis, like many people, was appalled at the devastation in East Timor following the successful vote for national independence. But instead of just thinking about helping the people of East Timor, she actually did something very practical about it.

In 2000, she effectively packed up her haberdashery store, loaded it into shipping containers and headed to war-ravaged East Timor to establish a women's sewing collective. Mavis had never been outside of Australia before.

Mavis was not deterred by difficulties and red tape and now there are 24 sewing centres. Hundreds of East Timorese women are now gainfully employed and countless others trained in sewing skills. With the help of other generous Australians, Mavis has sent more than 119 tonnes of donated household goods to the people of East Timor.

Mavis is still not content to take things easy, to relax and spend more time with her 27 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren and one great great grandchild. She continues to work for the East Timor Project and inspirationally maintains a work ethic that people many years her junior would find impossible.

In 2001 she was the Victorian Senior Achiever of the Year and in 2003 was made an official Australia Day Ambassador.

In recognition of her extraordinary work, Mavis was chosen as one of four 'Global Faces of Ageing' at the United Nations Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002.

A major stage play, *Mavis Goes to Timor*, has been produced about her East Timor experiences, with performances held in capital cities across Australia.

Mavis is a wonderful role model for everyone, especially for men and women living in their "Third Age". She is propelled by real, genuine altruism. Mavis sets an example that no matter what our age or circumstance, we can still make a difference; we can become engaged with the world around us.

"If the world is not a better place when you leave it, then you may as well not have been here," she says.



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2003

KATHERINE TEH-WHITE

WORKING AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Katherine Teh-White is one of the 60% of women in Australia who have been sexually harassed in their workplace. However, she didn't remain silent. The experience made her determined to help other women in the same situation. Katherine is the founder of Working Against Sexual Harassment (WASH).

Born in Brisbane, Katherine grew-up in Malaysia until the age of six when her family moved to Melbourne.

She started an economics degree at university, but switched to an arts degree when she successfully gained a cadetship with *The Age* newspaper where she worked for five years before moving to *The Australian*.

Katherine has an arts degree in politics and communication from Deakin University and has undertaken post-graduate studies at the Boston College for Corporate Citizenship.

Katherine knows from a personal perspective how unfair the workplace culture and the law has been in the past regarding sexual harassment. There were no advocates for action, no women's groups that recognised it as an issue and no self-help groups.

When Katherine experienced sexual harassment in her workplace she pursued action under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* and sought to change the public policy environment so that others didn't have to face the same difficulties and fears.

She brought together a range of women's groups to found WASH, which has successfully put the issue of sexual harassment on the public agenda.

WASH has called for the strengthening of legislation in Victoria, funding for an advocate for sexual harassment victims and grass roots consultation with victims. WASH has joined with the Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA House) to create the first self-help group for sexual harassment survivors.

After working as a journalist and a strategic and policy adviser within the minerals industry, Katherine is now managing director of Futureye, a network of consultants which provides strategic advice to corporations and governments across the sustainability agenda, from economics and trade to stakeholder engagement and diversity.

In 2000, Katherine won the Telstra Victorian Business Woman Award for the Private Sector.

She is a popular speaker on a range of organisational change, social and environmental issues.



Katherine has been a strong force in the community, bringing together many women's organisations to focus on an issue that had been largely swept under the carpet.

Katherine was at the peak of her young career when at 28 she encountered sexual harassment and victimisation in the workplace. At first, she didn't believe that her harasser could exert as much power over her career as he did when she rejected his overtures, but she soon felt the effects.

"I was so angry, so upset and so shaken that my career could tumble down on his word, no matter how hard I had worked, no matter what I'd done. I just had to do something about it," she says.

MARGARET WIRRPUNDA

ABORIGINAL ADVANCEMENT

Margaret Wirrpunda has contributed enormously to the development of state-based organisations involved with Aboriginal community development. She has worked long and hard for the advancement of Indigenous people, particularly women and children and she has been a strong voice for Aboriginal land rights.

Born in Cummeragunja in NSW in 1936, Margaret is a Yorta Yorta woman who speaks fluent Gumatji as well as Yorta Yorta.

Her family has always been involved with supporting their community. Her mother was in the first Aboriginal delegation to Canberra. Margaret learned at a young age how important it was to help those around her.

With her mother, Geraldine Briggs and aunt Margaret Tucker, Margaret as a young girl and teenager helped to fundraise for the Aboriginal Advancement League. Together in the 1940s, the three women visited and had discussions with many Aboriginal community members and families to identify how to improve their lives and worked to provide a platform for Aboriginal women and children.

From the mid-1960s, Margaret has worked as a volunteer on the National Council of Aboriginal and Islander Women, serving for 10 years as its secretary. She was a co-founder of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service.

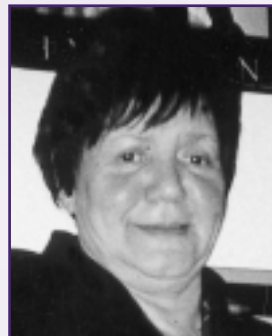
In the mid-1970s Margaret became the first female director of the Aboriginal Advancement League (Vic) and was a representative on the National Women's Consultative Council to the Prime Minister and Commonwealth Government Cabinet during the Hawke Government. She later became the secretary and served as President. In addition, she has also been a member of the Victorian Aboriginal Advisory Committee to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria in the 1970s.

In 1996, Margaret was elected to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission for the East Melbourne ward.

Much of Margaret's energy in the past few years has been focussed on Aboriginal land rights as one of the plaintiffs in the Yorta Yorta land claim, which in 2002 was rejected by the High Court of Australia.

For many years she has been associated with the Worawa Aboriginal College, the only independent residential school for young Aboriginals in Healesville, founded by her sister Hyllus Maris. She has served on the school's council as president and vice-president.

Margaret feels that working to improve the rights of Aboriginal Australians was just something she had to do. "It is part of our culture to help each other. We have to put out a hand to others who can't stand up for themselves."



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VICTORIAN HONOUR ROLL OF WOMEN

2003

MESSAGES

VICTORIAN HONOUR ROLL OF WOMEN 2003

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