

FAY SURTEES MARLES, AM

Born in Melbourne on 3 January 1926, Fay Marles, (nee Pearce) completed her secondary education at Ruyton Girls' School, where from 1997 to 2001 she would serve as the President of its Board of Directors.

Ms Marles was an undergraduate at the University of Melbourne between 1944 and 1948 when she completed a combined course of Bachelor of Arts and Diploma of Social Studies. She was later to recall how her first lecture was also the first lecture given at the University by the distinguished historian, the late Professor Manning Clark and how, when they met, many years later, they both remembered its circumstances in detail.

In 1971 as a mature aged student with 4 children, she completed an MA Prelim, and in 1975 at the same ceremony at which her daughter received her BA and Dip Ed, she was awarded her MA.

Fay Marles' first Social Work appointment was to the Commonwealth Social Services Department where she remained until she was forced to resign in 1952, on account of her marriage to Donald Marles. Later that year Ms Marles was appointed an Assistant Lecturer at the University of Queensland, when Professor Fred Schonell, an international authority on learning difficulties, established his well known Remedial Education Centre. Her contract included a provision that she could take a period of leave of not longer than 12 months at any time, which she interpreted as the first maternity leave provision in a University contract.

In 1975, after a gap of 22 years, Fay Marles returned to the full time workforce as a Senior Tutor in Social Work at the University of Melbourne, and the following year was appointed a Lecturer. She had always been concerned with issues of workforce equity and two years later she was to become Victoria's first Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, an office she held from 1977 to 1987, and for which she is probably best known.

In 1986 Ms Marles became a Member of the Order of Australia for her public service, particularly in the field of social welfare.

From 1987 until her appointment as the University's Chancellor, Fay Marles worked as the Managing Director of Fay Marles and Associates, a management consultancy firm specialising in equal opportunity, workplace dispute resolution and program planning and review.

In 1978, with Professor Weston Bate, Fay Marles published *Dilemma at Westernport*, a case study in land use conflicts and the growth of the planning imperative. Fay Marles has actively served on many public sector boards and committees of inquiry, including chairing the Study of professional Issues in Nursing for the Victorian Government following the Nurse's Strike in 1986. It is a text that is still in use for teaching purposes.

Ms Marles was Deputy Chairperson of State Trustees (1987-1993); a member of the Accident Compensation Commission Board (1988-1989); a member of the Board of the Mental Health Research Institute (1987-1992); and a member of the Victorian Equal Opportunity Board (1987-1993). In 1989 and 1990 Ms Marles chaired the Melbourne Olympic Social Impact Assessment Panel, and was one of a three-member committee appointed by the Premier to review the personnel management of the Victorian Public Service.

Fay Marles was on the Board of the Alfred Group of Hospitals between 1986 and 1995. For several years she chaired its Patient Care Committee and its Research Ethics Committee. She was its President from 1992 to 1994.

Fay Marles was elected to the council of the University of Melbourne on 1 January 1984 and served on it for the next twenty-one years. She was the Deputy Chancellor from 7 April, 1986 to 2 February, 2001, and was elected its eighteenth Chancellor on 3 February 2001, and re-elected 1 January 2002).

Fay Marles chaired the University's Equal Opportunity Committee for over fifteen years, and was the author of its first Equal Opportunity Policy. She chaired the Human Resources Committee and the Koori Education Committee, and is a former Chairperson of the Committee of Management of the Key Centre for Women's Health. She was a member of the Council of Medley Hall for 16 years and was a foundation Director of the Institute of Land and Food Resources.

In honour of Chancellor Marles' dedication to human rights the University established the annual Chancellor's Human Right's Lecture in 2001. Its first three orators, Mary Robinson, Xanana Gusmao, and Justice Michael Kirby have established its stature.

During her term of office as Chancellor, Fay Marles dedicated herself to increasing the number of indigenous graduates, and encouraging alumni support internationally, particularly in preparation for the University's 150th Anniversary Celebrations in 2003. Ms Marles has travelled widely for the University, to keep in touch with alumni in many parts of the world including London, San Francisco, New York, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Bangkok, as well as to Perak in Malaysia, Nachon Rachasima in Thailand and Dili in East Timor. In the University's 150th year, the Chancellor hosted alumni receptions overseas and in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne as well as regional Victoria.

In April 2003 Ms Marles was awarded a Centenary Medal for her service to Australian society in business leadership and higher education.