

Ms Marjorie Faith Barnard

The honorary degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred upon Marjorie Faith Barnard at a conferring of degrees ceremony in May 1986.



Marjorie Barnard signs the register of Honorary Doctorates, photo, *The University of Sydney News*, 20 May 1986, University Archives.

Report

Author and historian Marjorie Barnard, aged 88, was presented with an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters at the conferring ceremony in the Great Hall last week.

Miss Barnard has had a long and distinguished career as an Australian writer and historian and was a prolific reviewer and critic. Her works include *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* which was first published in 1947 in censored form and was re-printed in 1983 in its original form.

Miss Barnard graduated from the University of Sydney in 1920 with first class honours. She had to fight hard to get into the University because her parents refused to pay her fees. She won one of only eleven bursaries available to students at that time.

Later she was offered a place at Oxford University but had to decline because she was under the age of consent and her parents refused to give their permission or to pay the fare for the boat passage to England.

She then trained as a librarian while embarking on her writing career. Her first novel *A House is Built* was published in 1929. Others include *Green Memory* (1939), *Plaque with Laurel* (1937) and *The Persimmon Tree* (1944).

As an historian she first wrote in collaboration with fellow Sydney Arts graduate Flora Eldershaw. Together they produced, using the pseudonym M Barnard Eldershaw, *Phillip of Australia* (1938), *The Life and Times of Captain John Piper* (1939) and *My Australia* (1939).

In 1941 Miss Barnard produced a major historical work in her own right, *Macquarie's World*, the classic portrayal of the convict society of early Australia. Her last and most ambitious book, *A History of Australia*, was published in 1962.

Miss Barnard said after the conferring ceremony that she had never expected to be given such an honour

and was delighted. She joins the ranks of people like former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, artist Sir Sidney Nolan, actress Ruth Cracknell and women's rights activist Edna Ryan who have previously been presented with an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters by the University.

From 'The University of Sydney News', 20 May 1986