

Ms Daphne Anne Kok

The title of Honorary Fellow of the University was conferred upon Daphne Anne Kok in 2005.

Citation

Daphne Anne Kok was educated at North Sydney Girls' High School and entered the University of Sydney as an undergraduate in 1960. Thus began an association with the University which has continued to this day.

Very early in her university life, Daphne Kok became involved in various organisations within the university. Whilst a law student, she became an active member of the Sydney University Law Society, both as a Year Representative and in 1965 as a Vice-President. At the same time, she was actively involved in the World University Service, the Anglican Society and the Student Christian Movement of the University, each organisation placing emphasis upon service and help to others. The aim of helping members of the university, especially students, continued to manifest itself in different forms for the next 45 years.

In 1966, Daphne Kok graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Laws, followed in 1967 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts and in 1974 with the degree of Master of Laws. In 1967 she was admitted to practice as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of NSW and continued to be involved in her profession until 1991 when she was appointed as a Magistrate. During her period as a legal practitioner, she held many offices, including that of President of the NSW Women Lawyers' Association and President of the International Federation of Women Lawyers.

Despite the demands that her profession placed upon her, Daphne Kok continued to be actively involved in the affairs of the University. In 1963, whilst still an undergraduate, she was elected as a Director of the Board of the Women's Union, serving as a Vice-President for 2 years before being elected unopposed as the President of the Union on 12 October 1966. From 1968-1971 she served on the Board of the Women's Union as a representative of the Senate.

During negotiations which eventually led to the amalgamation of the Women's Union and the Men's Union, Daphne Kok was a member of the Joint Unions' Co-Ordinating Committee, Chair of the Wentworth Committee and a member of the Law School Committee of the Unions. All three committees were formed for the purpose of combining services for students. She played an important rôle in establishing Union Child Care Centres, the first at the "Shepherd Centre" and the second at "Laurel Tree House". During the amalgamation discussions and negotiations she played a prominent rôle in ensuring that women were not disadvantaged by the eventual amalgamation.

Following amalgamation of the Unions, Daphne Kok, served on the Board of Directors of the new amalgamated Union as a representative of the Senate between 1972-1975. Her interest in the welfare of students was also evident in her membership of the Council of "International House" of the University of Sydney over many years. She continues to be a representative of the Senate on the Council.

The establishment, in 1995, of the Union Foundation on her initiative was indicative of her continued interest in the welfare of students. The principal aim of this Foundation was to acknowledge and assist students who make a major contribution towards assisting their fellow students. She served as Chair of that Foundation until 2000.

Daphne Kok's deep interest in the University of Sydney was not limited to undergraduate organisations. In 1975 she was elected by and from the graduates of the University as a Fellow of the Senate. She served as a Fellow of the Senate from 1975-1982 and again from 1984-2001, a total of 26 years.

In 1986 she was elected as Deputy Chancellor of the University and held that office until 1989. In 1991 she was again elected as Deputy Chancellor and continued to hold that office until 2000. During her long service as a Fellow of the Senate she was a member of virtually every committee of the University, as well as being a member of the Faculty of Law, Chair of the Law Extension Committee and Law School Foundation. She served on the University's Finance Committee, the By-Laws Committee and on various Liaison Committees. She took particular interest in equity issues within the University, including the improvement of equal opportunity both in employment and education, the development of anti-harassment procedures, environmental and security issues and, especially, in the provision of high quality affordable childcare centres.

As Deputy Chancellor she chaired the Buildings & Grounds Committee and presided over many graduation ceremonies and other public events involving the University.

In 1987, the then Vice-Chancellor, Professor John Ward, established a company known as "Wentworth Annexe Limited" to oversee the construction of buildings providing student facilities such as the various

stages of the “Wentworth Building” and the refurbishment and extension of “Manning House”. Daphne Kok has acted as Chair of the Board of Directors since its inception.

Apart from her involvement in all aspects of University governance, Daphne Kok continued to be an active member of the Sydney University Law Graduates Association, the Arts Association and the Arts Alumni Association.

Daphne Kok’s service to the University of Sydney, in which she had the support of her husband and family, has always been given voluntarily and generously. For 45 years she has been devoted to this University and its members.

In recognition of her services to both the Women’s Union and the University of Sydney Union, a popular meeting-place for students in “Manning House” was, in 1990, officially named as the “Daphne Kok Room”.

Chancellor, in presenting Daphne Anne Kok, it is difficult to imagine a person more worthy of this honour. The University of Sydney has been fortunate to be associated with her and I invite you to confer upon her the title of Honorary Fellow of the University.