

Emeritus Professor Joan Rydon



The degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*) was conferred upon Emeritus Professor Joan Rydon at an Arts ceremony held on 4 June 1999. Emeritus Professor Rydon was the first woman in Australia to be appointed to a Chair in Politics - in 1975 at La Trobe University.



Emeritus Professor Joan Rydon, photo, Melissa Latham, 'The University of Sydney News' 10 June 1999, University of Sydney Archives.

Citation

Chancellor

I have the honour to present Emeritus Professor Joan Rydon for the conferring of the degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*).

Joan Rydon's academic career developed in four Australian universities. In 1941, she won a Public Exhibition to the University of Sydney, where she studied History, English, and Psychology. She graduated with honours in 1946 and was awarded a Diploma of Education the following year.

After 18 months of secondary school teaching, she took up the position of research assistant in the Department of Government and Public Administration, working first with T H Kewley and then with Professor P H Partridge.

Her next step was to the ANU where she held a similar position with Professor Leicester Webb. Her apprenticeship continued when she returned to Sydney in 1958 as research assistant to Professor Richard Spann in the Department of Government at this University.

With this experience behind her, she embarked on post graduate research at the University of Melbourne, where she also tutored in Political Science.

In 1966, she was appointed to a lectureship in Politics at what was then the new, small La Trobe University in Melbourne and her academic career there developed rapidly. In 1975, she became the first woman to be appointed to a Chair in Politics in Australia, a position she held until retirement. Her teaching was mainly in Australian and comparative democratic politics, and she has a strong interest in federalism.

She continues her links with the University of Sydney as a foundation member of the Council of the University of Sydney Victorian Alumni Association. She is a founding member of the Australasian Political Studies Association and the Australasian Study of Parliament Group.

At present she holds a Harold White Research Fellowship at the National Library of Australia. It was

awarded for continuing work on the political life of Archdale Parkhill.

She has many publications to her credit on parliamentary and legislative subjects, including the first post-war monograph on an Australian election campaign, written with the University of Sydney's former Professor of Political Theory, the late Henry Mayer.

These are serious and demanding scholarly pursuits, which could well seem dry to those not engaged in them. But there is nothing dry about Joan Rydon. She is energetic and enthusiastic, outgoing and voluble, and a *bon viveur* with a lively interest in wine.

Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting Emeritus Professor Joan Rydon, a distinguished scholar and graduate of this University, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*), and I invite you to confer the degree upon her.