

Ms Edna Ryan

The honorary degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred upon Ms Edna Ryan by the Chancellor Sir Hermann Black at a special conferring of degrees ceremony held at 6.00pm on Thursday 2 May 1985 which celebrated the centenary of the first graduations by women at the University of Sydney.

The other four women awarded honorary degrees at the ceremony were Miss Helen Elizabeth (Betty) Archdale, Dr Margaret Mulvey, Dr Grace Warren and Justice Elizabeth Evatt.



The five women who received honorary degrees: from left to right, Dr Margaret Mulvey, Ms Edna Ryan, Miss Betty Archdale, Dr Grace Warren and Justice Elizabeth Evatt, *photo, 'The University of Sydney News' 21 May 1985, University Archives.*

Report

Ms Ryan has devoted a lifetime to promoting the interests of working women, whose treatment by the early NSW arbitration system was the subject of her book, *Two-thirds of a Man*, launched last year on her eightieth birthday.

Ms Ryan has made submissions to a series of government inquiries, acted for the Women's Electoral Lobby in the National Wage Case and Maternity Leave Case, organised the first national conference of women trade unionists, and co-authored with Anne Conlon *The Gentle Invaders: Australian Women at Work* (1975).

She was also the first women deputy mayor of Fairfield and the first woman president of the Local Government Officers' Association, and participated actively in WEA and University extension courses. One of fifteen children, her own schooling ended in fourth year high school.

From 'The University of Sydney News', 30 April 1985