

Ms Jane Spring

The title of Honorary Fellow of the University was conferred upon Jane Spring by the Chancellor, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, at the Faculty of Economics and Business graduation ceremony held at 11.30am on 10 October 2008.

Citation

Chancellor, I have the honour to present Jane Fitzgerald Spring for the conferral of an Honorary Fellowship of the University.

For nearly two decades Jane Spring has been an inspiration and an example to the University community of how to meet and triumph over adversity and face disability with courage, determination and intelligence. Her story and her accomplishments personify Sydney University's central ideals and vision.

Jane Spring came to us in 1982 as a brilliant student from Ravenswood. She studied economics. In her Honours Year she moved to the Women's College and was introduced to rowing with the College Club. Soon after a group from that College reformed into the Sydney University Women's Rowing Club. Jane was elected President and remains so to this day, 22 years later. Since June 1986 Jane has competed or coached in rowing every year in the Australian Universities Games. She also skied for the University.

An irreverent book *Newtown Tarts* about Sydney University sportswomen was published in 1997 and has Jane speaking of these years and what was to come in these words:

"I became obsessed with rowing in 1988. The club was very small. I had to buy my own single scull. My rowing really took off when Murray Clark (now my husband) started coaching me.

Highlights of my rowing career include being selected to row in the NSW Lightweight four in 1989 (and turning down the opportunity in 1990 to focus on sculling), winning the NSW Champion Lightweight Scull twice and winning the Australian Lightweight Double Sculling championship. I was named Sydney University Women's Sports Association Sportswoman of the Year in 1990.

I was set to represent Australia in 1990 when I was in a car accident (driver went to sleep at the wheel) and I spent five months in hospital instead. I have since represented NSW in wheelchair basketball twice."

At the time of her terrible accident, Jane was a graduate in economics and law and admitted as a solicitor. She was one of the best women rowers in Australia and was expected to be a world class Olympic rower. If this was not to be, equivalent achievement in sports administration became one of her central goals to the infinite advantage of rowing, Sydney University and Australian sport, especially the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

Jane, in her new life, first established herself as a wheelchair athlete. She took up wheelchair basketball and within twelve months was chosen in the NSW Women's Basketball Team for 1991 National Championships where the team were silver medallists. Jane was in the team which repeated this performance in the 1992 National Championship.

As well as continuing as President of Sydney University Women's Rowing Club, Jane had also been elected the National Universities Rowing Co-Coordinator for Australian University Sport and a committee member of the Sydney University Women's Sports Association.

Jane's life was transformed when Sydney was selected for the 2000 Olympics. Jane was in the first echelon of sports administrators who were enlisted for the Sydney 2000 Games. This group became the famous "SOCOG" Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games and Jane's employer for six years from 1994 – 2000.

Jane had an outstanding Olympics and was a major contributor to the management performance which Juan Samaranch rated as "the best ever". After the Olympics, Jane was a recipient of the Australian Sports medal awarded by the Commonwealth Government. She has also received NSW Government Community Services Award.

Here at Sydney University, as well as having a "Blue" for Rowing, Jane has a "Gold" for services to the Sydney University Women's Sports Association. She is also an honorary member of Sydney University Sport. Our Women's Rowing Club has also named one of their newest boats "Jane Spring".

Chancellor, I now present Jane Fitzgerald Spring for the conferral of an honorary Fellowship of the University.