

Muriel Grimmett-Offley

Muriel was Coventry's first lady Undertaker and a Soroptimist for 33 years. She was SI Coventry's President in 1995/6 and remained active in the club until she sadly passed away in 2017.

Muriel overcame many obstacles to achieve success in life. She was born in Coventry and as a child she experienced the Coventry blitz; her home was destroyed, and she was taken out of the city to safety in Suffolk. Later she returned to Coventry and on leaving school at fourteen she trained at Underwood's Secretarial College, moving on to employment in this field.

During this period, she met her future husband, Gordon Grimmett, a funeral director, whom she married in 1951. As a young mother with three children, she became involved in the administration side of her husband's business, gaining a valuable insight into how things were run.

When her husband died in 1982 Muriel made the decision to take over the running of the business. She reorganised the premises the following year and decided at this point to start attending the funerals herself. She felt she had the dedication and special understanding to deal with the problems and emotional impact of bereavement; her organisational skills and compassion for clients made her outstandingly successful, well loved by the people of Coventry, and popular with every church group in the city.

Muriel became the first woman president of Coventry and District Funeral Director's Guild in 1983 and president of the Regional Guild in 1986. She also became a member of the Inner Wheel.

Through her business she met Ken Offley, an insurance agent from Essex who later became her second husband in 1987. They continued with their separate vocations until Ken's retirement, when Muriel decided to sell the business and join him. She still made herself available whenever requested to attend funerals, and her example of according respect and dignity to the deceased and their families led the way for many funeral directors to employ women in similar roles.

But Muriel also loved fun. She loved musical theatre and Broadway shows; she passed her talent for singing and dancing on to her family, and often entertained her Soroptimist friends. Muriel was a true daughter of Coventry; she sustained knocks but always got up and 'started all over again'. She was courageous to the end, kind and caring, loved by many.

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