

Katherine Gardiner Smith (1897–2002)

SI Glasgow West Founder Member

There cannot be many people who have lived in three centuries, but this extraordinary feat was achieved by an extraordinary woman, **Katherine Gardiner Smith**, or KG as she was known to many of her friends. Born in 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee, and having lived during the reigns of six monarchs, **Katherine** died four weeks away from her 105th birthday in 2002.

Growing up in an age when women were not considered good enough to vote or to receive equal pay, she nevertheless established herself as someone whose opinions counted, not just in her field of physical education, but in the world at large.



After a spell as a governess in Pollok House, Glasgow, the home of the Stirling Maxwell family, Katherine undertook teacher training and was appointed to the post of Assistant Lecturer in Physical Training (Women) at Jordanhill College, Glasgow in 1925. She remained at Jordanhill College, now part of the University of Strathclyde, until her retirement in 1958, by which time she had been promoted to Dean of Women. For 33 years, she guided and cajoled her students not only to be the very best in their fields, but also to go out and establish their places in society.

In tune with her belief in the importance of women's role in the world, in 1954 Katherine was a founder member of Soroptimist International Glasgow West, a local branch of an international organisation which aims to be a global voice for women. She became president of the club in 1957. Forty years later, still going strong, the club gathered to celebrate her 100th birthday.

Despite her deafness and failing health in her later years, Katherine remained a stalwart Soroptimist, a champion of physical fitness, and a believer in women's ability to achieve.

Katherine Gardiner Smith, teacher and mentor for generations of women; born November 7, 1897, died October 11, 2002.