

AUDREY WALDEN-SMITH 28.12.1918 to 02.10.2016

An SI Cape of Good Hope founder member and Honorary Life Member with 53 years' membership 1963–2016, Audrey was recognised nationally as a pioneer in the advancement of education methods, in particular Junior Primary and Early Childhood Development (ECD), focusing on Mathematics and Literacy.

Born and educated in Queenstown, Eastern Cape, Audrey chose the teaching profession. Her school sports were hockey, cricket, golf and swimming. Her education in the Arts included music, dancing and elocution.

Her career began on a Transkei mission station as 'Principal' of a one-teacher school with 15 pupils ranging from Grades 1–8. The proceeds of selling the school garden's flowers and vegetables paid a local woman to carry buckets of river water on her head for the school. Extra-mural activities were swimming (when the river had sufficient water) and riding, with Audrey on a horse and the pupils on donkeys.



Eastern Cape High School and Junior Primary teaching posts followed, before Audrey relocated to Cape Town. She joined Herschel Girls School, teaching Latin and coaching hockey and swimming, as well as playing cricket for Western Province. She studied further at London University's Institute of Education, where she experienced post-war food rationing and worked as a supply teacher in London's East End.

Back home, after attaining an SA Infant School Certificate, once it was made available to those left-handed, Audrey became Principal of Lansdowne Preparatory, enthusiastically promoting new methods of ECD and Junior Primary education. The following twelve years saw her serving on many inter-Education-Departmental committees, including the SA Teachers Association General Committee and Joint Council. She chaired the SA Infant and Nursery School Association.

Audrey took on leadership roles in her Junior Primary field, spearheading a new approach to English Literacy teaching and educating both gifted children and those with learning disabilities.

As Inspector of Schools, she wrote manuals for the Education Department on the teaching of Mathematics and English. She served on the Bernard van Leer Committee to design the Early Learning Centre in Athlone, a so-called 'coloured' community.

Retirement saw her embarking on an exciting period - the education of black Grade One pupils and in-service teacher training. She consulted in Botswana in their multi-national English medium schools. Almost to her dying day, she coached children in Mathematics.

She supported many charities, including the Clothing Guild, doing secretarial duties for St Luke's Hospice and knitting for premature babies at the Mowbray Maternity Hospital. She worked with the charitable trust *Ikamva Labantu*, and having successfully proposed that they become a 5-O Project, became their Vice-Chairman from 1996 to 2004.

Audrey was a dedicated Soroptimist - a beloved, highly-respected member of SICGH and a supportive and encouraging role model to younger Soroptimists. She said: "It has been an enriching experience. I have met outstanding women both in SA and abroad, and learned about so many other professions and widened my own experience of people. It was with gratitude that I accepted the honour of being President of SICGH in 1978-1979". We are proud to have had this dignified and exceptional lady as a member of SICGH.