

Margaret T. Cowan 1928 – 2018

Margaret née Murray was born in Mount Florida attending the local Primary School and Queens Park Secondary School, Glasgow. Thereafter she attended the University of Glasgow before becoming employed, during the 1950s, as secretary of Hutchesons' Grammar School, Glasgow. As an attractive 21 year old, Margaret was known to regularly turn the heads of many of the senior boys. However, there was only one turned head which gained Margaret's attention, that of her future husband, Alex Cowan.

Margaret and Alex married in 1953 and had two children, Dawn born 1957 and Bruce born 1961. They remained happily married until Alex's death in 2006.

A close friend at both secondary school and university was Winnie Woodburn, later to become Winnie Ewing, well known lawyer and eminent politician. This association gave further direction to Margaret's professional career. She became the first female Estate Agent in Scotland, subsequently recalling 'that their offices were the first in Glasgow to have a shop front with a window displaying the properties for sale'.

Margaret also supported Winnie's legal and political career as a Personal Assistant and was later employed as Legal Secretary to Sir William Gray who served as Lord Provost of Glasgow from 1972 to 1975.

Margaret, encouraged by Winnie, joined Soroptimist International, Glasgow Central Club in 1965. Margaret perceived the members to be 'an eminent bunch of women, at the top of their careers, whom she found quite intimidating'. Herself a committed asset to SI Glasgow Central, Margaret fulfilled many roles and offices including: Club President in 1971 to 1972, representative to Divisional Union, Scotland South, 1972 to 1978, Club Social Convener and Secretary of the Diamond Jubilee Committee in 1987 and Club Secretary from 1983 to 1989. Margaret's tremendous attention to detail was a major asset and this skill was of great value as a member of Federation Conference Committee in 1979 and 1988.

In preparation for the 70th Anniversary of the Club she carried out extensive research of the Club's history.

Margaret is remembered, too, for her perfect dress sense. At the 1971 Glasgow Central Annual Dinner, Margaret wore a beautiful tapered evening gown, in wild silk of iridescent teal, with fluted sleeves and velvet trims. Her hair was beautifully styled to mark the occasion.

Margaret enjoyed travelling to many Soroptimist Conventions, Belgium, San Francisco, Rome and Dublin and many locations throughout the UK. In 2005 Margaret received the title of Honorary Member of the Club for fulfilling 40 years of commitment. Accepting this merit with 'humility and a little pride' Margaret's regret was, 'that there were still too many people out there who had not heard of Soroptimist International'.

In life, Margaret was described as a giver not a taker, kind, considerate and generous – a supporter and contributor. Furthermore, she was gregarious, inquisitive and intelligent. Margaret celebrated her 50th Anniversary of membership on the 18th November 2015.

Just prior to her death, Margaret in 2017 moved to Crieff to be closer to her daughter.

Margaret had been indefatigable in her efforts for Soroptimism for over 30 years and there are few members who have been more dedicated to the cause.

