

JANET JONES OBE - 1930-2016

Janet was born in Connah's Quay. She was a teacher who had a passion in life for early-years' education and equality of the sexes. She qualified as a teacher at the Froebel Institute and went on to teach in schools in London and North Wales before moving to Runcorn, Cheshire in the early 1960's.

In 1954 Janet married Thomas Jones and subsequently had a daughter and two sons. Devoted to teaching, she went back to work at Granville Street School in Runcorn in the early 1960's. It was not long before she had her own unit for children with special needs at Grange Junior School. In 1971, she became head of Astmoor Infants School which is part of Runcorn New Town.

Janet's achievements were many and varied. She was a Magistrate for many years on the Halton Bench and was President of the Runcorn Branch of the National Association of Head Teachers. She was also President of the local Liberal Party from 1973 to 1978.

A woman of influence herself, Janet campaigned against the under-representation of women in politics. She was part of the "Women into Public Life" campaign as well as a member of The 300 Group which fought to get more women into Parliament. She encouraged fellow Soroptimists to become involved and join her at meetings.

Despite having to take early retirement in 1981 when she developed a serious, progressive illness (MS), Janet went on, in 1986, to become National Chairman of the British Association for Early Childhood Education, - a post she held for three years. During this time, she gave evidence to Parliamentary Select Committees on four occasions.

In 1987 Janet was elected co-chairman of the Women's National Commission, a government advisory body. She travelled regularly between London and Brussels in that role and helped to set up the European Women's Lobby. In 1988 she became patron of the Prix Femmes d'Europe.

Janet was twice invited to join national delegations to China to discuss women's issues, once with the Queen. In 1994, which was the United Nations International Year of the Family, Janet attended the concluding conference in Montreal as one of three UK delegates.

In 1995 she was awarded an OBE for services to education.

Locally, Janet was a member of the management committee of Halton Women's Aid and helped to run the local women's refuge. She was an energetic Councillor during the 1990's.

Janet was a prominent member of Soroptimist International Runcorn, Frodsham & District throughout these times and, although extremely busy, she took on many roles at the club including, on several occasions, that of Programme Action Officer. In this role, Janet worked tirelessly and with passion to educate and empower women and girls. She was an inspiring role model, and a generous mentor to younger members. Janet was President of the club in 1985 and 1990. Then in 1997 the club was proud to have her as President as they celebrated 50 years of the club's charter.

