

Kathleen Manning

Kathleen, who died in 1999, was an inspirational member of SI Middlesbrough and Club President twice.

She worked at international level for Soroptimism as International Soroptimist Co-ordinator for Economic and Social Development from 1995 – 1999.

Her sister, Margaret Alderson, SI Newcastle-upon-Tyne, remains a very committed Soroptimist. She described Kathleen as “Spirited, determined, confident, courageous, always a fighter for what she believed in”. Margaret also describes her glamour and glitz, which all of those who knew her remember well.

Kathleen was one of the first women returners, re-starting her working life after having her two children. She had a very successful career in the Civil Service and many men and women in the north of England owe her a debt of gratitude for the time and trouble she took in helping them find secure jobs and dignity in employment.

In her journey to the top of her profession she acted as mentor to many women who went on to achieve great things in their personal and professional lives. While she supported a wide variety of causes, she was especially interested in organisations which advanced the potential and the status of women. “Teesside Women” honoured her as a Woman of Achievement, and a series of lectures at Durham University on Fair Play for Women were named “The Kathleen Manning Lectures” as a tribute to her.

Soroptimist International played the greatest part in her life for nearly 25 years. She drove forward with enthusiasm Programme Action at Club and Regional level. She represented her Federation on The Equal Opportunities Commission, The Women’s National Commission, and at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference. As International Co-ordinator for Economic and Social Development she influenced policy and practice and was able to share her views with other Soroptimists attending the annual UN Convention in New York.

Kathleen died, fittingly, on International Women’s Day, 1999.

Members of SI Middlesbrough and SI Northern England remember Kathleen with great affection and respect for her charm, vivacity and most of all for the tremendous contribution she made to society and to Soroptimism.



Photo Credit Margaret Alderson