

## **Dr Anne McAllister OBE, (1892-1983)**

### **SI Glasgow**

The ancient University of Glasgow admitted the first female student in 1892, the same year a girl was born to Robert McAllister and his wife Anne in the prosperous Lanarkshire market town of Biggar some 30 miles south of both Glasgow and Edinburgh. Robert was the town Apothecary and he encouraged the education of his clever daughter Anne who enrolled in Glasgow University, where she is listed among the 119 women students graduating in 1917 with a First Class Honours Master of Arts degree.

Career options for women were limited, indeed practically non-existent, places for post-graduate training being filled by ex-servicemen returning to education. Anne secured a place on a teacher training course at Stow College and there developed an interest in Phonetics, possibly due to her encounters with WW1 wounded service men with speech difficulties. Whatever sparked her enthusiasm Anne stayed in the speciality, becoming a Lecturer and subsequently a Senior Lecturer at Jordanhill College, the main teacher training establishment in Glasgow which is now part of the University of Strathclyde. The Glasgow School of Speech Therapy was established by Anne in 1935, and so the profession in Scotland was born. She remained a Director and figurehead of the school until 1964.



In 1936 Anne opened the first clinic at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Glasgow, dealing with patients with congenital cleft palates and harelip conditions both before and after surgical repair. In 1937 she attained a Doctor of Science from the University of Glasgow and published the world-respected 'Clinical Studies of Speech Therapy', the first doctorate in the UK awarded to a member of the developing profession of speech therapy.

During the early half of the 20th century, in other parts of the UK parallel programmes evolved and, as communication improved, an amalgamation of ideas and common professional standards became necessary. The Journal of Speech Therapy was published during the WW2, albeit in limited form due to paper restrictions. Anne edited the third edition, using the opportunity to fly the flag for the Glasgow College successes during the preceding decade.

Anne was a founder member and first chairman of the Association of the British Society of Speech Therapists, the forerunner to the Royal College of Speech and Language. A conference was held in London to mark this event where, unsurprisingly, all the expert speakers were medical MEN! Anne was awarded an OBE in 1954 for her achievements in the UK world of Speech Therapy. She was a true 20th century pioneer for women working in professional education and research.

SI Glasgow West was chartered in 1954. Anne became Club President in 1958-1959 and is still remembered by a few as a very formidable lady! She exemplifies the women who established Soroptimism and Anne's contribution to women's independent working lives is unmatched. She broke boundaries, and inspired and created opportunities for many women to become educated and make the most of their potential. A Soroptimist through and through.

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