



ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne 3000

RHSV Distinguished Service Award Nomination for Judith (Judy) Marilyn Maddigan

7 April 2022

Judy Maddigan has made a valuable contribution to the RHSV through her long, constructive involvement with the Victorian Community History Awards, her articles for the *Victorian Historical Journal*, her supportive membership of the society since 2013, and her involvement in promoting local history and, more specifically, women's history.

Judy holds a Bachelor of Commerce, Graduate Diploma of Librarianship and a Masters of Librarianship and Information Services (specialising in Conservation and Archives). These qualifications provided the springboard for activism in the fields of libraries, history, especially community and women's history, and politics. She worked in the Commonwealth public service from 1970 to 1976, then as a librarian with Moonee Valley Regional Library (1983–86), as a school librarian (1987–89) and as branch services librarian with the City of Maribyrnong (1990–95). She was a co-founder with John Sawyer of 'Defend Public Libraries', a movement to protect public libraries during the period of amalgamation of local councils and compulsory competitive tendering.

A Councillor with the City of Essendon from 1985 to 1991, Judy next turned her attention as a member of the Australian Labor Party to state parliament. She was elected to the Legislative Assembly for Essendon in 1996 when the Kennett government was in office. From 1996 to 1999 she served as Opposition Parliamentary Secretary for the Arts, Member of the Parliamentary Library Committee and Member of the Parliamentary Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

After a Labor government under Steve Bracks took office in 1999, Judy became a member of the Parliamentary Public Accounts and Estimates Committee and chair of the Portrayal of Women in Outdoor Advertising Committee and of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Libraries. It was an historic occasion when Judy was elected as the first female Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in 2003; she served in this role until 2006 and retired from parliament at the 2010 election.

During her time in parliament Judy continued her interest in women's history, conducting research on the long fight for women's suffrage in Victoria. She gave the keynote address in the form of a public lecture at the conference held by RHSV and the University of Melbourne in 2008 to celebrate the centenary of achieving the vote. Her address was subsequently published in a special issue of the *Victorian Historical Journal*, and since then she has also published an article in the journal on female munitions workers at the Maribyrnong munitions factory during World War I. This drew on work she had done on an exhibition 'The Forgotten Girls of World War One', mounted by Melbourne's Living Museum of the West in 2018. Most recently, in March 2022, Judy launched the current RHSV exhibition, 'Kaleidoscope', celebrating the contributions of women members of the RHSV since the society's foundation in 1909. She has also suggested that RHSV take the lead next year in celebrating the centenary of women's right to stand for election to Victoria's parliament, and has volunteered her services for the organising committee

A further contribution made by Judy to history and heritage was the formation of Women's Heritage Victoria, to gather information about and protect archival collections relating to women's organisations and history. It has since merged into Her Place: Women's Museum, which operates from Clarendon Street, East Melbourne. As the representative of Women's Heritage Victoria, Judy served on the History Council of Victoria for a number of years contributing her organisational expertise to the revision of its constitution and the formation of the Friends of HCV.

Judy has also had a long association with the Essendon Historical Society and during the 1990s produced six booklets covering the hospital, Moonee Ponds courthouse, the Essendon River League, Queen's Park and other aspects of the district. She is currently focused on organising the society's collection and to this end arranges a weekly cataloguing session.

Judy's congeniality and enthusiasm for local history have enlivened many prize-giving ceremonies of the Victorian Community History Awards. Information Victoria initiated this competition in 1998 and organised it until 2010. The RHSV was involved from the outset through provision of the judges' panel. Judy gave the Oration at the prize-giving, Queen's Hall, in 2003 and later on many occasions presented the category awards.

When it appeared in 2010 that the competition would be abandoned, the RHSV successfully advocated for its reinstatement and in 2011 formed an administrative partnership with the Public Record Office Victoria. Judy became involved as chair of the Public Records Advisory Council and in 2017 secured the rebranding of the top prize as the Victorian Premier's History Award, which greatly added to the prestige of the competition. Owing to the Covid epidemic, the VCHA winners were reported online in 2020 and 2021. Judy announced the category prizes in 2021 with her little dog Lily perched on one shoulder, an endearing image for the community history circle.

Judy Maddigan has supported the RHSV since 2013. In particular she has been a highly significant figure in women's history and the VCHA; this competition is of fundamental importance to RHSV goals. We strongly recommend that Judy be honoured with a Distinguished Service Award.

Judith Smart AM

Carole Woods OAM