

Suzanne Margaret Russell A.M., B.Ed., M.B.A.
Home Economist & Consumer Advocate
25.3.1940 – 22.5.2004



Judith Ryles

Suzanne Russell: Consumer Advocate, Home Economist, Author, daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, colleague and friend.

Suzanne the eldest child of Margaret and George Westcott grew up in Melbourne enjoying a happy childhood with her siblings, Kay, Sandra, and Stephen. Many memorable holidays were spent at the family holiday house in Sorrento. In childhood her leadership and decision making was evident in her ability to organise her siblings. She was known affectionately 'as bossy britches'.

In Girl Guides she excelled earning many badges including the prestigious Queen's Guide Award. As a Sea Ranger she was chosen to open the car door for the Queen Mother during the 1957 Melbourne visit.

Secondary schooling was at MacRoberston Girls' High School where she showed great academic ability. After Matriculating she attended Larnook Domestic Arts Teachers' College and became a teacher of Domestic Arts, later to be known as Home Economics and now Consumer Science.

After Graduating with the Diploma of Domestic Arts, Suzanne was appointed to Malvern Girls' Secondary School, where she taught Domestic Arts. After her marriage to Jim Russell she spent the next years caring for her family of four, Mark, Andrew, Peter and Karen. During this time she did emergency teaching for the Education Department of Victoria and was Consumer Affairs Consultant to Industry and Government. She resumed full time employment as Senior Lecturer and Course Co-ordinator, Consumer Science, Faculty of Applied Science, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), now Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University. She was later promoted to Associate Professor Consumer Science.

Suzanne was Consumer Affairs Consultant to RMIT University and State and Federal Governments. Her roles included Trustee of Travel Compensation Fund - Council of Consumer Affairs, Chair of the Managing Trustees - King & Amy O'Malley Trust, Member of the Food Safety Council - Victoria, Chair of the Victorian Government Food Standards Committee, Member of the Victorian State & Territory Advisory Committee, Stronger Families & Communities Strategy - Department of Family and Community Services, Member of the Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal – Occupational & Business Regulations List, to name some in a long list of community service.

Suzanne retired recently as President and Member of the MacRobertson Girls' High School Council.

Suzanne's early attempts at cooking, under the tuition of her mother, did not show the latent ability that she later developed for the future role of being one of the co-authors of *Cookery the Australian Way*, now in its Seventh Edition and used extensively in schools and homes throughout Australia, for almost 40 years.

Her lifelong commitment to the Home Economics profession was exemplary. She held office on committees of the Home Economics Institute of Australia, Home Economics Institute of Australia (Victorian Division), Larnook Ex-Students' Association and the Victorian Home Economics and Textiles Teachers' Association and was Home Economics delegate to the National Council of Women – Victoria.

In 2001 Suzanne was awarded Member of the Order of Australia, for 'service to consumer advocacy, protection and education...' In the same year she became a Fellow of the Home Economics Institute of Australia. She held Honorary Life Membership of the Australian Nutrition Foundation, the Australian Consumers' Association and the Victorian Home Economics and Textiles Teachers' Association. She was Inaugural Home Economist of the Year in 1990. Suzanne was awarded an O'Malley Trust Post-Graduate Scholarship and the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Medal for Services to Consumers.

Suzanne was a most remarkable woman described by her family, colleagues, and friends as someone with vision, intelligence, unflinching good humour, a person of dignity and integrity with a strong sense of social justice, one who showed wisdom, expertise, encouragement, leadership and life long commitment to the wellbeing of individuals and families in the Australian community and who made the world a better place. Her family were her main focus and yet she found time for other commitments.

She achieved many things. She did not seek recognition. Her satisfaction was in a job well done, a task completed and a new challenge tomorrow. She will be sadly missed.

Suzanne is survived by a loving family.



Judith Ryles is a friend and colleague of Suzanne's and this Obituary was written in collaboration with her husband, Jim Russell, her sister Kay and other colleagues.