

OBITUARY

1st Female Hospital Superintendent

Dr. Mary Puckey 1898-1990

Dr. Mary Puckey, general superintendent of the Rachel Forster Hospital, Redfern, for 22 years, died at Wentworth Falls on March 25. She was 92.

Dr. Puckey was the first woman to be appointed general superintendent of an Australian hospital.

When she joined Rachel Forster, it was a 12-bed facility in George Street. When she retired, it has 120 beds on its present site, which once contained the cottage occupied by the convict surgeon William Redfern.

She established a medical records library at Rachel Forster and was instrumental in establishing the NSW Association of Medical Librarians. She was made an MBE for services to medicine in 1963.

Mary Courtenay Puckey was born on February 18, 1898, and educated at Wollongong High School and the University of Sydney. From 1925 to 1937, she was medical officer with the South Australian Department of Education and, from 1937 to 1941, bacteriologist and assistant medical officer at Adelaide's Northfield Infectious Diseases Hospital.

She became general superintendent at Rachel Forster in 1940 and held that post until her retirement in 1962.

During that period, she was an active member of the Medical Women's Society of NSW and a councillor on the NSW branch of the British Medical Association.

A private memorial service was held on Thursday at the Pine Grove Crematorium, Eastern Creek. Dr. Puckey is survived by two sisters, Selina and Grace.

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