

DR. SELINA PUCKEY

FRIEND OF THE CHILDREN, RETIRES

Dr. Selina Puckey handed over to her successor yesterday after more than 21 yeas as medical superintendent of the Renwick Hospital for Infants, Summer Hill.

"I'm looking forward to being happily employed as a housewife by the name of Mrs. William Marshal," she said.

Marshal is her married name but she has always used her maiden name of Puckey during her career.

Dr. Puckey came to Renwick after she was evacuated from New Guinea in 1941.

She had been a resident doctor at Renwick for about six months in 1926, not long after she graduated from Sydney University.

Dr. Puckey recalled "In those days there were still not many women doctors and they still had to overcome prejudices and get themselves established."

Hopes To Visit Son In London

She said she had decided to retire "a little before my time" to be with her bushland at their home at Blackheath in the Blue Mountains.

She also wanted to go to England to see her son William, who is paediatrics registrar of St. Thomas Hospital, London.

For the past two years she said she had trouble in getting a resident doctor for Renwick and had to live most of the time in her flat in the hospital so she could be on call.

The hospital now has a resident, and Dr. Puckey has handed over her responsibilities to another woman doctor, Dr. V. Caradus, who has

come from the children's department of Prince Henry Hospital.

If after all these years Dr. Puckey has a favourite patient, it is probably one of her first - Miss Sylvia Barnett, of the Helen Keller Hostel for the Blind, Woollahra.

Miss Barnett was a child patient when Dr. Puckey first met her in 1926. She was admitted with an eye disease and later lost her sight.

Miss Barnett later achieved some success as a musician and when Dr. Puckey returned to the hospital during the war she saw a newspaper article about Miss Barnett.

Dr. Puckey found where she was living, sought her out, and they became friends.

Last Friday Miss Barnett sang and played a song she composed herself at a farewell party for Dr. Puckey.

Another tribute came yesterday from Matron M. Brissenden, who said; "Scores of mothers will miss Dr. Puckey as someone who not only understood their illnesses but understood their home problems as well.

"It has been the personal care and interest she has had in both children and parents that has gained for her their confidence and high esteem."

The staff of the hospital has given Dr. Puckey a cedar-framed vanity mirror and an album of snapshots of past events and patients at the hospital, to remind her of her many years at Renwick - if she will need any reminder.

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