

Obituary

DIANA SOPHIE CRAIG (NEE MANN) 1912-1992

Members of the Orthoptic Association of Australia were saddened to hear of the death of Diana Craig (Mann) in Melbourne on the 7th of February, 1992.

Di was a remarkable person, providing intelligence, inspiration and wisdom for orthoptists for over fifty years.

Her own path in orthoptics was that of a true pioneer. As her secondary education at Clyde School for Girls did not prepare her sufficiently to enter University to study science, she became a student at the Working Man's College (now the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) to study chemistry, enabling her to then enrol at Melbourne University, and graduate in 1932 with a Bachelor of Science, having studied chemistry, physics, zoology, physiology, biochemistry and bacteriology. In the patriarchal mode of the time, this in itself was remarkable.

Her entrance to orthoptics was via her role as scientific secretary to the eminent ophthalmologist Dr Ringland Anderson, where she gained a solid grounding in data collection, diagram compilation and the preparation of books and journals. As well as performing clinical skills of binocular vision and visual field measurements, Di schooled herself in binocular vision and its anomalies by reading the classic texts of Duane and Worth. Travelling to the Central London Ophthalmic Hospital in 1937, she worked and studied under the impressive Shiela Mayou. On returning to Melbourne she was appointed orthoptist at the Alfred Hospital, initially on no pay, then later at one pound per week. In 1939, after the formation of the Orthoptic Board of Australia, she was declared, on a viva voce examination with Drs Travers and Fenton, to be competent to practise orthoptics.



Di set up private practice at 55 Collins St until 1972, moved across the road until 1976, then spent her final two years in Collins St with Drs Coote, Lidgett, Borger and Markwick. During the war she tested aircrew for defective stereopsis and worked with Dr Hugh Ryan at the RAAF Medical Centre in Spring St. Whilst pioneering the profession in these ways, she also returned to Melbourne University to obtain a psychology major and become a member of the Australian Psychological Society.

Di became the orthoptist in charge when the orthoptic clinic at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital reopened following a poliomyelitis epidemic, working closely with Drs Fenton and Ringland Anderson, and also was in charge of

the training course for orthoptists in the tower room above the old eye theatre until 1956. An interim period to 1963 was covered by Leonie Collins and Winifred Brown whilst Di cared for her parents, then she resumed this role until 1969. She continued with some lecturing up to the transition of orthoptics from its hospital base into the tertiary system at the Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences in 1974. Her clinical work continued to 1982, when Victorian orthoptists marked her retirement with a dinner in her honour.

Throughout her career she was a prolific publisher, writing 32 papers, most of them as the sole author. Her papers were published in the Transactions of the Orthoptic Association of Australia, the Australian Orthoptic Journal, the British Orthoptic Journal, the Transactions of the Ophthalmological Society of Australia, the British Journal of Ophthalmology and the Australian Journal of Ophthalmology. In her 1975 treatise on objective orthoptic treatment she says: "The orthoptist deeply involved in the troubles of her patient across the synoptophore, perhaps gains glimpses of the workings of the visuo-motor mechanisms that are hidden from others", highlighting both her concerns for the patient's welfare and her thirst for solving the mysteries of binocular reflexes.

For all her expertise in clinical work and academia, she became, in 1944, a foundation member (later to be made a fellow) of the OAA and remained one of its significant activists. She held the office of President over four terms, was secretary for five terms, was for sixteen years the

editor of Australian Orthoptic Journal and was a member of the Orthoptic Board of Australia for ten years. Many members will also remember how she, and her husband Jim, would frequently host the annual Christmas parties of the Victorian branch of the association at their house which reflected their love of gardens and of Eastern art and culture, occasions made even more enjoyable by the cider from her family's property at Pakenham Upper where she grew up, a place she remained close to for her whole life.

Throughout her entire career she had a tireless pursuit of academic excellence. She was a distinguished teacher because of her active and intelligent mind and her generosity of spirit. She strived to further education and research, always saying that there was so much to do. She would sit in a seminar or a conference, or in her garden or at her table over a cup of tea, and say about an orthoptic puzzle "I've sometimes noticed such and such . . . have you seen this, what do you think?" She asked many questions and raised many issues for those who follow her.

To honour Di, the Victorian branch of the OAA has established the "Diana Craig Memorial Prize" for an outstanding contribution by an honours student from the Bachelor of Applied Science degree in orthoptics. She was delighted at the maturity of the profession today, and we are the ones who will be forever grateful for having known her, and for her vision into the future.

Julie Green