

# Vale Joyce Fardell 1923–2007

Joyce Fardell, one of the 'matriarchs' of school libraries in New South Wales, passed away peacefully in Ashfield, NSW, on 15 July 2007 at the age of 84. This tribute is a collective endeavour by some of those who knew and worked with her, made on behalf of all of those people, administrators, teachers, teacher librarians and students, whose lives and learning Joyce enriched. She deserves a central place in the history of school libraries in Australia, especially in New South Wales.

Joyce became Officer-in-Charge of the NSW School Library Service in 1958, playing a significant role in guiding the thinking of planners and decision makers. In 1969, she co-authored the *Report on School Libraries*. According to Maurice Saxby, its views made a significant impact and the provision of libraries in schools grew incrementally. Joyce provided advice and supervision when needed during dramatic changes in the building of new school libraries, their furnishing and equipping, as well as the allocation of funding for the disadvantaged.

With the advent of Commonwealth grants in the late 60s and early 70s, Joyce led her staff in providing extensive classified lists of fiction and non-fiction for primary and for secondary schools, each having been critically assessed and reviewed. *The Central Cataloguing Bulletins* (1961–1981) with notes and miscellany, which preceded *SCAN*, were a lifeline for teacher librarians. Videos were produced for in-service courses on integrating infants into primary library services, on integrating the library into the secondary curriculum, and on storytelling.

A significant and much-valued provision under Joyce's care was the Small Schools Box Library Service that supplied eagerly anticipated boxes of books and other resources to small country schools.

Joyce trained, encouraged and mentored interstate colleagues. Ann Parry believes that she was also instrumental in the establishment of the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL). 'The success of the one-day conference on school libraries within the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession in Sydney in 1970,

which Joyce coordinated, was seminal in the establishment of IASL which happened the following year in Jamaica.'

When the School Library Service became part of the Division of Services, Joyce became an agent for change, ensuring that although the structure and mission of the new Library Services changed, the passion and commitment to genuine service did not change. She was fierce in that resolve!

Joyce was heavily involved in building up the competence and professional qualifications of teacher librarians. For many years she provided the only help available to teachers given the responsibility for organising school libraries. This became a ten-day basic training course during school holidays. When funding became available she drew upon the skills and abilities of her staff as well as others to organise residential courses. Not satisfied with that, Joyce and colleagues supported the implementation of one year of tertiary professional development. Kuringai CAE then instituted such a course. The tradition of the dual qualification for teacher librarians in NSW was established.

June Bailey recalls that, after her first day of a new appointment, 'in a state of shock I wrote a letter to the School Library Service which basically said "HELP"'. A few days later I met Joyce, whose opening remarks were "We've got two days". Those were the most important two days of my life. I learned enough about managing a library to last me 'til the next holiday course Joyce ran.'

Joyce influenced and inspired others with her passion and her depth of knowledge of Australian children's literature. It was her vision that school libraries fulfil an essential central function in education; she promoted them as places for active, enjoyable and enriching learning. She supported the Children's Book Council, providing resources and assisting with the staging of Children's Book Week celebrations. Her personal connection with authors from Australia and overseas was invaluable. In 1982, Joyce received the Lady Cutler Award for 'distinguished Services to Children's Literature in New South Wales'.



**Gladys Joyce Fardell**  
**Officer-in-Charge, NSW School**  
**Library Service**  
**Head, NSW Library Services,**  
**Division of Services 1959–1979**

John Vaughan, former Director of Studies and Assistant Director General, NSW Department of Education, stated in an earlier personal tribute to Joyce, 'You promoted the cause of reading, not simply for learning but for the sheer joy of the experience. You saw libraries as centres encouraging the development of the potential of each child. You understood that education is concerned with thinking — with understanding, not with mind stocking and the repeated infliction of silly standardised tests.'

Lastly, H.K. Carey, former NSW Director of Services, has stated, 'There are many teachers and students who owe much to this wonderful woman. She encouraged love of reading, brought students and teachers to see the library as a crucial tool to aid learning and led many to discover the excitement and satisfaction of library-based research. Given her achievements and influence one may wonder why a grateful Department of Education has not recognised her work in some tangible form.'

Joyce Fardell, on behalf of all those involved in education whom you have inspired and challenged and resourced to achieve higher standards, we say a deep and heartfelt thank you.

**Georgia (Green) Phillips and**  
**Colin Hyndes, with Ann Parry, Bev Fathers**  
**and Heather Sykes and others named**  
**within.**