

Dray, Ruby Gertrude (1887–1966)

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D. Graham Stacey, Ph.D. (Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California, the United States) retired in 2018 as the associate dean for Admissions and Student Affairs, Loma Linda University. Graduate qualifications in family therapy, clinical psychology and bioethics, enriched by experience as pastor, psychologist, lecturer and administrator – permitted a full career in Australia and the United States. Published research on the statistical analyses of student performance has given way in retirement to research of family history.

Ruby Dray was treasurer of the North New South Wales Conference and then the North New Zealand Conference for over thirty years.

Early Life

Ruby Gertrude Dray was born on January 12, 1887, in Waverly, an eastern suburb of Sydney, New South Wales.¹ Her father, William Frederick Dray, a house painter and decorator, had emigrated from Maidstone, Kent, England, in 1883, and married Letitia (Lettie) Smith at St Paul's Anglican Church in Redfern, Sydney, in 1885. Seven children were born into the family, with Ruby the eldest.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was just a few years old in Australia when the leaders planned a camp-meeting to be held in Ashfield, Sydney, October 19-30, 1894.² On the last Friday evening of the camp meeting, November 2, 1894, sixteen persons were baptized into the Adventist church in an evening service at the local Baptist chapel.³ William Fredrick Dray and his wife Letitia were among that number.⁴

The Drays involved themselves as members of the local church and Fred Dray was a member of the “decoration” committee for a subsequent camp meeting in 1902.⁵ The family moved to Auckland, New Zealand, around 1902. They were financially destitute.⁶ Ruby was baptized there in 1903.⁷ She and her sister Nita spent their professional lives in service of the Adventist Church.⁸

Education and Career

Not much is known of Dray's early education, but as a student at the Pukekura Training School in Cambridge, Waikato, New Zealand, between 1908 and 1912, she prepared herself for her career.⁹ She worked in the school office during 1908.¹⁰ The school itself operated for just five years before moving to Longburn, Palmerston North, New Zealand.¹¹ It was an exercise in faith as students helped build and operate the school. Dray then spent two years working at the Sanitarium Health Food café in Auckland before receiving an invitation to transfer to the Australasian Union Conference Office in Sydney, Australia, for clerical work.¹² While working at the café in 1913, she made a brief visit to the Fiji Mission, attending the Fiji Council under the leadership of John E. Fulton.¹³ She transferred to the Australasian Union Conference at the beginning of 1914, but remained there for just six months until the middle of 1914 when she transferred to the New South Wales (NSW) Tract Society. She remained there until sometime in 1917, and then was engaged in clerical work at the NSW Conference Office, Strathfield, Sydney, between 1917 and 1920.¹⁴

In October 1920, the New South Wales Conference was divided into the North New South Wales Conference and the South New South Wales Conference.¹⁵ At the conference session held between October 5 and 17, 1920, Dray was appointed as the first treasurer of the South New South Wales Conference.¹⁶ However, at the Australasian Conference Committee held between October 27 and November 16, 1920, she was appointed secretary/treasurer of the North New South Wales Conference.¹⁷ She remained in that position until October, 1924.¹⁸

While in North New South Wales, Dray had been invited to take up a position with the Health Department.¹⁹ At the beginning of 1924, she received an invitation to be the bookkeeper for the Queensland Conference.²⁰ She did not fill either of those positions. When, towards the end of 1924, she received an invitation to return to New Zealand, she did



Ruby Dray
Photo courtesy of Graham Stacey.

accept a position in the North New Zealand Conference office and left Sydney on October, 25, 1924. At the conference session held at the end of 1926, she was elected as the North New Zealand Conference treasurer.²¹ Her service in North New Zealand continued for twenty-seven years until she retired as the conference accountant. She was described as an “indefatigable worker who has certainly earned a rest and change from the keeping of books.”²² This statement was demonstrated by fourteen years of voluntary service at the North New Zealand Conference office following her retirement.²³

On December 8, 1966, Ruby Dray died at Mt. Eden Retirement Village, Auckland New Zealand. Pastor B. C. Grosser wrote of her that it was with “extreme reluctance [that] Sister Dray laid down the responsibility she had carried these many years.”²⁴

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NOTES

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4. Desmond F. Stacey, grandson of Fred and Lettie Dray, interview with author, 2011.?

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