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Marjorie Oke (18 December, 1911 - 14 August, 2003)

I was born at the Richmond City (Swimming) Baths. At the age of four I swam and gave swimming demos for the Royal Lifesaving Society, showing people how easy is was to swim and rescue. I went to school at age seven, still giving swimming demos at swimming carnivals.

My father decided to bring me up as a boy. I went barefooted and dressed in boy clothes.

At Uni High School I became the Senior Prefect, form captain and sports captain.

I went to Teachers College and became a school teacher in 1931. I taught at Scorsby, Fairfield and Moe schools.

At Moe I helped form a group for people with disabilities showing the community they could do lots of things.

In 1950 I helped set up the UAW with Rob and Linda at the inaugural meeting with a policy of equal pay, equal opportunity for qualifications and promotion and peace.

We returned to Melbourne in 1983 and I became the School Nanna and puppeteer at my grandchildren's school at Errol Street, North Melbourne.

I was a member of the original anti-war group which became the Peace Council.

I was a member of the Australian Consumers Association. At this group I startled the world by suggesting the wealthy countries donate an eighth of their income to poorer countries.

I was a member of the Northcote Community Health Centre and the District Health Council and formed the Hydrotherapy and Massage Group for older women at the Northcote City Baths. This activity proved to lots of people that they could lose their disabilities.

A book called 'Put Your Whole Self In' has been re-printed three times and features me in part. The book won three prizes.

I've enjoyed helping people to get themselves well with physical activity.

In addition to all of the above, Marj helped form a branch of the Aborigines Advancement League and made sure it was chaired by an Aboriginal woman. In 1992, at the age of 80 Marj was a founding member of the Older Women's Network. In the last years of her life, before she died at the age of 91, Marj lived at the Old Colonists' Association of Victoria's Village and then Nursing Home in Rushall Crescent, North Fitzroy.

Marj's remarkable contribution to social justice issues was recognized when she was successfully nominated by the UAW and her name and achievements included in the Victorian Women's Honour Roll on 8 March, 2002.