

Champion for country women

Mary Eileen Hallion

CWA state and national president

Born: April 26, 1908; Snowtown

Died: November 13, 2004; Adelaide

EILEEN Hallion was state president of the Country Women's Association and later national president. In 1974, she was made a member of honour of the association.

The second child of Hannah and Patrick Howard who owned farming property, Eileen married Murray Hallion in 1936 and lived at Bumbunga, near Snowtown.

She did "men's work" and "took an interest in everything that went on".

During times of drought, they "did without luxuries" but "didn't get melancholy about it all - just took what the Lord gave us".

In 1947, Eileen joined the Snowtown Branch of the CWA, as a matter of course, holding positions of vice-president and president.

In 1955, she was treasurer of the Yorke Peninsula Divisional Moonta Bay Holiday Cottage, and then in 1959 became chairman of the Holiday Cottage Committee as well as the Yorke Peninsula divisional president.

Eileen loved to knit and exhibited her work in handicraft exhibitions.

In 1957, she spent three weeks at Mt Macedon in Victoria learning civil de-



fence procedures, including methods of evacuation and first aid, later compiling a register of CWA members who had skills which could be used in case of an emergency. Eileen was state president of the association from 1962 to 1965, becoming the national president of the CWA of Australia in 1965 until 1968.

As national president, Eileen led a delegation to ACWW world conferences in Melbourne (1962), Dublin (1965) and

Michigan (1968). The year 1968 was very busy for Eileen, as she was awarded a life membership of the association, the ACWW Grace E. Frysinger International Fellowship Award (an exchange program of the Women's National Farm and Garden Association of America), was convener of the Civil Defence Register, became chairman of the SACWA state finance committee and was a representative for Freedom from Hunger.

Eileen enjoyed a trip to America for three months to study conservation of soil, water, forests and wildlife, horticulture and agriculture research.

In 1970, Eileen joined the state property committee and became the rural aid representative in 1971. She gave an address at the first national Seminar on Safety in Rural Industry.

Eileen retired from SACWA activities in the 1970s to become a carer for her husband, Murray, and her eldest maiden sister, Catherine, still continuing her valuable work for her Catholic parish and Meals on Wheels until the early 1980s.

She remained conversant in world affairs, spending her final years at Southern Cross Care Hostel at Fullarton.

She was made a CWA member of honour in 1974 and is remembered as a gracious lady with a ready smile and kind word for everyone.

Betty Tothill