

Dorothy Hill (1907 – 1997)



Born in Brisbane, geologist and palaeontologist Dorothy Hill studied at the University of Queensland (UQ) where she graduated in 1928 with first class honours whilst also being awarded the University Gold Medal for the most outstanding graduate of the year. In 1930 Dorothy won a science travelling scholarship to Cambridge University where she worked on geological research and completed her doctorate.

In 1937, she returned to UQ as a research fellow marking the beginning of a fifty year career in which she progressed from research fellow, to lecturer, senior lecturer, before being

appointed as a research professor of geology in 1959, making her Australia's first female professor. In 1971 she became president of the University of Queensland Professorial Board.

Dorothy specialised in the specific area of fossil corals and served as Secretary of the Great Barrier Reef Committee for nine years. Her geological reef research led to significant discoveries while she helped to establish the Heron Island Marine Biological Station. Dorothy was also the first woman elected President of the Australian Academy of Science in 1970. In 1971 she was made Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in recognition of her services to science.

Dorothy encouraged young women to achieve stating “previous conventions” can be overcome with application and dedication Dorothy is an inspiration for women in science. She is an icon for the School of Earth Sciences and the University of Queensland. Dorothy maintained an active interest in geology into her retirement, walking daily to university to exchange news and views until her death in 1997.