

Obituary-Mabel Josephine Mackerras 1896-1971. proc. R. Soc. Qd. 83:103.

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## OBITUARY

### Mabel Josephine Mackerras

1896–1971

Josephine Bancroft was born at Deception Bay, received her secondary education at Brisbane Girls' Grammar School, and commenced a Science course at the University of Queensland in 1915. She graduated B.Sc.(Hons.) in 1918, was admitted to M.Sc. in 1930, and in 1967 was awarded the degree of D.Sc. (*honoris causa*). In 1920, after two years as Walter and Eliza Hall Fellow in Economic Biology in the University of Queensland, she entered the medical course in the University of Sydney, graduating M.B.(Hons.) in 1924, in which year she married her fellow graduate Ian Murray Mackerras. She became a Member of the College of Pathologists of Australia (M.C.P.A.) in 1956 and in 1965 was awarded the Clarke Medal of the Royal Society of New South Wales.

She held appointments in Sydney hospitals (1924–26), and as Assistant Entomologist, Division of Economic Entomology, C.S.I.R., Canberra (1930–47), Senior Parasitologist, Queensland Institute of Medical Research, Brisbane (1947–61), and Research Fellow (post-retirement), Division of Entomology, C.S.I.R.O., Canberra (1962–68). She served in the 2nd A.I.F. (1942–46), first as Captain pathologist, and from 1944 as Major parasitologist-entomologist responsible for all experimental infections with malaria at Land Head-Quarters Medical Research Unit, Cairns.

Her grandfather, Joseph Bancroft, and her father, Thomas Lane Bancroft, both noted Queensland doctors and experimental biologists, were members of the Society. She was elected a member in 1918 and an Honorary Life Member in 1954; she served on the Council in 1951.

Her researches, reported in over 90 published papers, covered a wide range in parasitology and entomology, a field of interest shared with her father, with her Professor of Biology at the University of Queensland, T. Harvey Johnston (co-author of her first 16 papers, 9 of which were published in the Society's Proceedings—as were 5 later ones), and with her husband. They were characterised by the meticulous care with which alternative explanations were explored before conclusions were drawn. (Her research is more fully documented and discussed in a paper by I. M. Mackerras and E. N. Marks, 'The Bancrofts—a century of scientific endeavour', read before the Society in March 1972 and to be published in the Proceedings for that year.)

Her quiet, gentle humanity and her scientific integrity had a strong influence on all who knew her, and the Society offers its sympathy to her husband, Dr I. M. Mackerras, and son, Dr David Mackerras.

*E. N. Marks*