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YOW (2001)

Life Member

Fred W Humphreys

Born, Kalgoorlie, 11 November 1907

Fred was in the early 1930's a member of the Cottesloe and later the UWA Athletic Clubs. He was a member of the UWA team which won the Fremantle to Perth relay in 1932, running a 1¼ mile leg. Fred was a member of the club committee in 1933. He was State 440 and 880 yards champion in 1933 [setting a State record of 2m 2.4s in the 880] and State 880 yards champion in 1934. He was awarded a Full Blue for athletics in 1934.

After graduating from UWA with a Diploma in Commerce in 1934 he began a career in the Commonwealth Public Service departments of Immigration and Social Services. His employment took him initially to Melbourne but he returned to WA in 1947 and became the State Director of Social Services. At the time of his death the Social Services Department was located in the building which bore his name, Humphreys House.

His return to his home State was also the beginning of a long and distinguished association with the WAAAA as an official and administrator. He filled, at various times, the roles of Association Arena Manager, Chief Field Referee, State Selector, Chairman of Council and WA Conference Delegate to the Amateur Athletic Union of Australia. Fred was the Chief Throwing Referee at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games, Arena Manager for the Perth 1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games and Manager of the Australian Athletics Team which competed in the 1966 Commonwealth Games in Jamaica. In the mid 1960's he was a member of the AAU of Australia Executive Committee and an Australian Selector. He was awarded an MBE in 1966 and made a Life Member of the WAAAA in 1963.

Fred continued his association with the UWAAAC post war. He was a good friend of his old club, Patron in 1958 to 1966 inclusive. He was instrumental in keeping the University Club in the WAAAA in 1965 and 1966 when the move to district clubs was at its height. It was his mature judgement and wise leadership as Chairman of the Association Council that allowed non district clubs to weather the storm. He was made a Life Member of UWAAAC in 1965. In recognition of his contribution to athletics the F.W.Humphreys Perpetual Trophy was initiated in the 1966-1967 season to be awarded to a UWA athlete ***"for service to athletics (Club and WAAAA) through both competition and administration"***.

In addition to athletics Fred's other passion was the photography of WA's unique wildflowers, developed in parallel with that of his wife, Evelyn, who delighted particularly in using them in ikebana. Both were active in the Western Australian Wildflower Society.

Fred thought nothing of making a long day or weekend trip to the country to photograph a rare banksia or other wildflower. In March 1967 he became the first to collect flowers of a rare new species of Banksia from the Stirling Range. A collection of his 35 mm slides (mostly taken in the late 1950's and 60's) was donated to the

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Western Australian Herbarium, and another set to the Australian National Botanical Gardens in Canberra. Many have been reproduced in various publications.

The definitive book on banksias, *The Banksia Book*, written and first published by Alex George in 1984, had its original concept with Fred, who would have been a joint author with the then Government Botanist, Charles Gardner, had they both lived.

A triggerplant from the Great Victoria Desert was named *Stylidium humphreysii* in his honour by an American botanist, Sherwin Carlquist, in 1969.

Fred Humphreys was in every way a gentleman, always putting the good of the sport he loved before any club interest. He was always fair, selfless and loyal to his friends, colleagues and acquaintances. He died suddenly on 3 September 1967 sadly missed by his wife, Evelyn, and all who knew him.

Prepared by Don Young with assistance from Alex George, Dennis Barton and Fred Napier, February 2001.

PS. If any reader has additional information about Fred Humphreys to add to the above would they please contact Don Young on email donyoung@cygnus.uwa.edu.au