



Joan Durdin, ABM missionary to PNG and pioneer of nursing education in South Australia

Dr Joan Durdin, pictured above in 2024, a parishioner at Holy Innocents Belair, former ABM missionary to PNG and pioneer of nursing education in South Australia, died recently at the venerable age of 102.

After completing her nursing studies in Australia and England Joan was Nurse Educator at St Barnabas school of nursing at Dogura, Papua New Guinea from 1966-72.

The Flinders University alumni blog site has the following information about Joan: 'After completing her general nursing training at the Royal Adelaide Hospital in 1945, Dr Durdin moved to Melbourne to complete her midwifery training at the Queen Victoria Hospital. In 1949 she was awarded a Florence Nightingale Scholarship to study at the Royal College of Nursing London.

She later returned to the Royal Adelaide Hospital where she was Senior Sister Tutor from 1955 until 1964, before spending the following six years as a nurse educator in Papua New Guinea.

In 1974 Dr Durdin joined the Nursing Department at Flinders University (then the Sturt College of Advanced Education) as a lecturer. Just one year later, she was fundamental to the establishment of South Australia's first tertiary nursing course – and only the third in Australia.

From 1979 to 1981 Dr Durdin was Head of the Nursing Department, then Head of the School of Health

Professions at Flinders University before she retired in 1983.

During her career, Dr Durdin was also active with the College of Nursing Australia (now the Australian College of Nursing), which awarded her an Honorary Fellowship in 1984. She was President of the South Australian Branch of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation (now the Australian Nursing Federation) between 1976 and 1980, and served on the Board of Management of Child and Adolescent and Family Health Service for three years, including as Chair in 1983.

The importance of Dr Durdin's work was recognised when she was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1985, and later in 1994 when she was awarded an honorary doctorate from Flinders University.'

The Archbishop of Adelaide, Geoff Smith said: "As a committed follower of Jesus Joan lived a life of devoted service for which we thank God. Joan's funeral will be at Holy Innocents Belair on Thursday February 27 at 2pm.

"May Joan rest in peace and rise in glory!"

Date Created

February 20, 2025