



**OUTSTANDING  
WOMEN  
IN OPHTHALMOLOGY**

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Monica Hu



# Dame Ida Mann (1893-1983)



Graduating in medicine, Dame Ida Mann subsequently published a DSc thesis on the development of the human eye, followed by congenital defects of the eye. Both publications became definitive texts of embryology. Ida established the first contact lens clinic in London prior to the First World War and researched mustard gas keratitis and thyroid eye disease. Appointed as Assistant Surgeon to the Central London Hospital, Ida became the first female consultant to the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, later known as Moorfields. Oxford University appointed her Margaret Ogilvie's reader in ophthalmology and she subsequently gained a personal chair, becoming the first female professor at Oxford. She was honoured with the Doyne lecture in 1928 and the Harrison Gale lecture in 1929. In 1949 her husband Bill Gye, a cancer researcher, became ill and they both travelled to Australia to escape the bleak climate of post war Britain, settling in Perth. Ida set up an ophthalmic practice with her original Gullstrand slit lamp, which was eventually passed on to Andrew Stewart, Past President of RANZCO. Father Frank Flynn, a Catholic priest and ophthalmologist who had been Ida's House Surgeon at Moorfields some 20 years earlier, introduced her to trachoma. This led to an investigation into the cause of the high rate of blindness among the Aboriginal population of the Kimberley and Western Desert. Ida was honoured for her many contributions to ophthalmology, becoming a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in 1950 and Dame (DBE) in 1980. The Dame Ida Mann Memorial Lecture was established in 1988 by the Council of the College in her recognition.

# Dr Kate Campbell (1899-1986)

During WW2, Dr Kate Campbell was a paediatrician to the Queen Victoria and the Royal Women's Hospital in Melbourne, at a time when the Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) was a serious problem. She noted a marked difference in the incidence of ROP in premature babies born at the Queen Victoria and Women's Hospitals, and was struck by the fact that the Women's Hospital was relatively well off and used oxygen lavishly in the management of premature babies. The incidence was much lower at the Queen Victoria Hospital where such oxygen usage could not be afforded. She suspected that the disease was related to the concentration of oxygen to which the babies were exposed. She wrote to Professor Norman Ashton, recently appointed Head of Pathology at the Institute of Ophthalmology, in London. His particular field was diseases of the retinal arterioles in diabetes and ROP. Ashton designed a research technique which allowed him to study variations in the calibre of retinal arterioles in premature kittens exposed to different oxygen concentrations. Kate Campbell's hypothesis proved correct and the use of oxygen in premature infants has been strictly controlled ever since. Unfortunately, Dr Campbell was not given the recognition she deserved; she was not mentioned in the original paper, which established Prof Ashton's reputation. In 1964 Dr Kate Campbell shared the inaugural Brittanica-Australian Award for medicine with Sir Norman Gregg whose contribution to Ophthalmology is honoured by the Gregg Lecture at the RANZCO Annual Scientific Meeting.



# Dr Dorothy Potter (1922-2009)



Born in Auckland, Dr Potter graduated from medical training at Otago in 1948. Her house-surgeon years were in Napier, where she was influenced towards ophthalmology by Dr Jim Gray. She left for England in 1950, where she worked at the Royal Westminster and Central Eye Hospitals in London, obtaining the Diploma in Ophthalmology in 1952. While in England Potter developed a strong admiration for Dame Ida Mann. Potter served Masterton as a medical ophthalmologist and became the first (and only) woman president of the OSNZ in 1984. Potter started the New Zealand Glaucoma Society and helped establish the Glaucoma Trust. She helped establish the Wellington branch of the Medical Women's Association in 1971 and was made an honorary life member in 1991. She did clinical research among Maori in the East Cape region and published several papers on ocular allergy. For all these endeavours Potter was deservedly awarded the CBE in the New Year's Honours List of 1993, and is honoured by the Dorothy Potter Medal Lecture.