

Died 2nd March 1956
3792.17

CITATION — NANCY WINIFRED LONG.

Nancy Winifred Long was born at Talbot, Victoria, on 30th August, 1918. Her early education was received at the Clunes Primary School and later, the Ballarat Girls' School. However, her father being deceased, she was obliged to leave school at fourteen, to seek work.

She was engaged in domestic employment for some three or four years until being accepted as a trainee nurse by the Ballarat Base Hospital at the end of 1936. She completed her General Training in 1940 and the following year, her Midwifery Training. In 1942, she went to Melbourne and at the Tweddle Babies' Home, Footscray, successfully completed the Infant Welfare Certificate.

Returning to Ballarat in 1943, she became Sister-in-Charge of the Children's Ward of the Base Hospital. Already she was evincing a wider interest in nursing and fearing that insufficiency of formal education might prove a hindrance in pursuing her interests, she set about studying at night classes so as to matriculate.

War had temporarily halted future planning, but the immediate post-war years brought a new-found community interest in hospital services and nursing standards. Anxious to play its part, the Hospitals and Charities Commission instituted the "Florence Nightingale Scholarship" which would enable its holder to study nurse training abroad.

First recipient of the Scholarship was Sister Nancy Long. In 1946 she travelled to the U.K. to study for the Tutor Sister's Diploma of the Royal College of Nursing within the University of London, and in 1947, was granted the Diploma with a distinction in Nursing Education.

As part of the practical side of the course, she spent the next twelve months studying nurse training and hospital

organisation in hospitals in the United Kingdom and Scandinavia.

In 1948, she returned to Australia and joined the staff at the Alfred Hospital, Melbourne, as tutor-sister.

At this time, the Hospitals and Charities Commission, with the Nurses' Board, were involved in introducing an entirely new concept in nurse education — a college-based type of training that it was envisaged would replace the existing hospital-based training throughout the state.

The scheme was initiated at Bendigo, with the establishment of the Northern District School of Nursing, that would provide nurse-training for northern Victoria. In March 1950, Sister Nancy Long was appointed first Dean of the School.

Generally, the scheme was to prove short-lived. Financial recession, political turmoil and hospital pressures served to force its abandonment and even the closure of the School that had opened in Melbourne.

The Bendigo experiment survived, despite years of criticism, retrenchments in funding and constant threats of closure. Survival was due, almost wholly, to the drive and untiring efforts of Miss Long and to her unwavering faith in its worth and the importance of its retention.

Acceptance and approval were won slowly and the hard way, but recognition of her efforts came in the early 1960's when, on the recommendation of the International Council of Nursing, she was awarded a Rockefeller Foundation Grant to study Nurse Education and Administration in the United States and Canada.

Unfortunately, at this point, the serious illness which was eventually to necessitate her resignation from the School, first began to manifest itself, forcing abandonment of all future plans.

She carried on courageously as Dean until increasing physical incapacitation forced her to relinquish the post in 1974.

During her years of office, Miss Long was associated with various community organizations and served on several committees associated with nursing education.

From 1958 to 1974 she was a very active member of the Education Committee of the Victorian Nurses Board. She served for four years on the Course Development Committee in Nursing of the Victoria Institute of Colleges. For two years she was a member of the Advisory Council of the Bendigo Girls' High School.

She was a member of the Matrons' Association for some ten years; a member for seven years of the Nurse Educators Section of the Royal Victorian College of Nursing; a member of that College for twenty-five years and a Fellow of the College of Nursing, Australia for twenty-three years.

In terms of achievement; of tireless, dedicated effort to nursing in general and nursing education in particular, few in Australia made a greater contribution in these fields in the post-war decades than Nancy Winifred Long.

As Frank Cusack has written in "Lister House, A History of the Northern District School of Nursing", (Melbourne, 1976), in speaking of her resignation:

The Committee could do little but accept her resignation with the most genuine regret. It was not an occasion for decorative oratory. All were aware what nursing in northern Victoria would one day be seen to owe to her and her small band of stalwarts who, in twenty odd years of pioneering effort, and despite innumerable difficulties, had managed to initiate a new concept in nursing education. It was an achievement whose monument lay in the future.

Miss Long resigned 15-9-74

Realising she would lose much of her independence, she sought the co-operation of a few people to assist her in many small ways. Those people remained faithful to her and I believe she would want me to offer her gratitude to them for their loyalty and support.

Speaking recently to me of her past students, I was told of an incident which occurred at the end of the student's first year.

Difficulty in getting down to study.

It is reassuring for us to know that Nancy died peacefully. Speaking with a nurse who attended her the evening before she died, she reported continuing interest in other people and a sense of calmness and resignation to her lot in life.

Today we say farewell to Nancy Winifred Long MBE - one who has so diligently served her fellow people, suffered so much in silence and has very much enriched the lives of all of us.

*Orated by Theron Kaulaban,
President, Committee of Management,
N.D.S.N.*

Funeral