

MARGARET OBE & DR WILLIAM MCINTYRE MC CMG

(1881-1969)

by

Reg. A. Watson

©

William Keverall McIntyre gynaecologist and Margaret Edgeworth McIntyre (1886-1948), community worker and politician, were husband and wife.

William was born on 13 January 1881 in Hobart, son of John McIntyre, barrister, and his wife Adeline Janetta, née Langdon. John was part of the legal firm Butler, McIntyre and Butler, reputed to be the oldest continuous legal business in Australia. Gamaliel Butler was the founder in 1824. He had two brothers, Gilbert Langdon and Walter Archibald.

Educated at The Hutchins School where he was enrolled 25th January 1892. He played cricket and football. He is mentioned in the Hutchins School Magazine of 1894. A photo is shown of him in 1897 (see below).



William, front row left. Hutchins School photo

He played he served (1901-02) in The Anglo-Boer War as a member of the 2nd Tasmanian Imperial Bushmen Contingent. After the war he read engineering at the University of Sydney (B.Eng., 1921). He then worked as an assayer in Tasmania, at Mount Bischoff and Zeehan. At St John's Anglican Church, Ashfield, Sydney, on 28 September 1909 he married Margaret Edgeworth David; they were to have four children.



McIntyre in his Boer War uniform

During World War I William McIntyre joined the Royal Army Medical Corps and rose to major. For his service in Macedonia, he was awarded in 1917 the Military Cross (MC) and appointed to the Greek Order of the Redeemer the following year. After being discharged from the army, he became a resident medical officer at the Edinburgh Royal Maternity (Scotland) and Simpson Memorial Hospital. Returning to Tasmania, he entered general practice at Launceston.

William had made obstetrics his speciality. At the Queen Victoria Hospital, Launceston, he was honorary obstetrician for thirty-seven years and an honorary lecturer (1925-57). McIntyre drew on his engineering training to build a negative pressure respirator at a time when infant resuscitation was in an early stage of development.

A great achievement of Dr McIntyre was his development of the humidcrib which naturally has saved countless lives throughout the world. He really has not been given the credit for which he deserves. The construction of the humidcrib was by Eric Waterworth who developed the electric automatic record changing system.

During World War II he worked tirelessly in his private practice and devoted long hours to hospital administration. Towards the end of his career he estimated that he had performed about 8,000 deliveries, averaging 600 a year in 1940-45. He was a member (1939) and fellow (1945) of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (R.C.O.G), London, a member of the British Medical Association and president (1934 and 1955) of its Tasmanian branch. In 1950 he was appointed CMG*. Devoted to music, both light and classical, he belonged to the Launceston Players' Society, of which his wife had been a founding member.

William McIntyre died on 16 February 1969 at Launceston and was cremated, survived by two sons and two daughters. A nurses' home at the Queen Victoria Hospital was named in 1950 after him, as was an oration, established in 1955 by the State committee of the R.C.O.G.

Margaret was born on 28 November 1886 at West Maitland, New South Wales, eldest daughter of (Sir) Tannatt William Edgeworth David, a geological surveyor from Wales and his English-born wife Caroline Martha, née Mallett. Margaret was educated privately and at the University of Sydney (B.A., 1907). Having experienced at first hand the dangers and difficulties of confinements in remote mining centres, she encouraged her husband, William, to study obstetrics and took his family to Scotland where he enrolled at the University of Edinburgh (M.B., Ch.B., 1915; M.D., 1919).



Margaret

Margaret involved herself in communal and welfare activities. A member of the National Council of Women of Tasmania, New Education Fellowship, Young Women's Christian Association and Launceston Youth Movement, she was also a commissioner (1940-48) of the Girl Guides' Association. In the late 1940s she helped to establish the G. V. Brooks Community School at Newnham. Its curriculum, initiated by the Launceston Progressive Educational Association, aimed at providing pupils with a range of practical skills, responsibility in running the school and education for constructive leisure. In the evening it held adult education classes.

In 1990 the school was moved to a new site at Rocherlea.

She also was an advisor to the ABC and was on the committee of the Ashley Boys Home.

Margaret was appointed OBE in 1948. That year, standing as an Independent, she won the division of Cornwall in the Legislative Council. She was the first woman to be elected to the Tasmanian parliament. Conscious that women should take a greater interest in government, she believed that every effort should be made to prepare all young people for citizenship.

He was good friends with Dorothy Edwards, CBE who was Tasmania's first female mayor.



Dorothy Edwards CBE

On 2 September 1948, less than four months after her parliamentary career began, she was killed when the Australian National Airways DC-3 in which she was travelling crashed into a mountain near Nundle, New South Wales. All thirteen on board were killed and was on route from Brisbane to Sydney.

She was buried in Tamworth cemetery. Margaret McIntyre House, Launceston, was opened by the Girl Guides' Association in 1950.



“Bellerive rocks”. Water colour by Margaret McIntyre in the author’s private collection.

*Companion of St Michael and St George.