



HUMANS OF THE ROYAL

Elaine Unkles OAM

Elaine Unkles OAM was Director of Physiotherapy at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital from 1984 until 2011.

As its Director, Elaine worked tirelessly to raise the profile of Physiotherapy, and more broadly Allied Health Professions within the hospital. She led the growth and expansion of Physiotherapy into clinical areas such as the Lymphoedema Service, Department of Emergency, Orthopaedic Screening Clinics and Amputee Outreach Services.

Elaine vigorously promoted and sponsored research. After 10 years of persistence, she secured funding for the appointment in 2002 of the Inaugural Conjoint Physiotherapy Research Fellowship with the University of Queensland. She subsequently secured a joint research position with Griffith University.

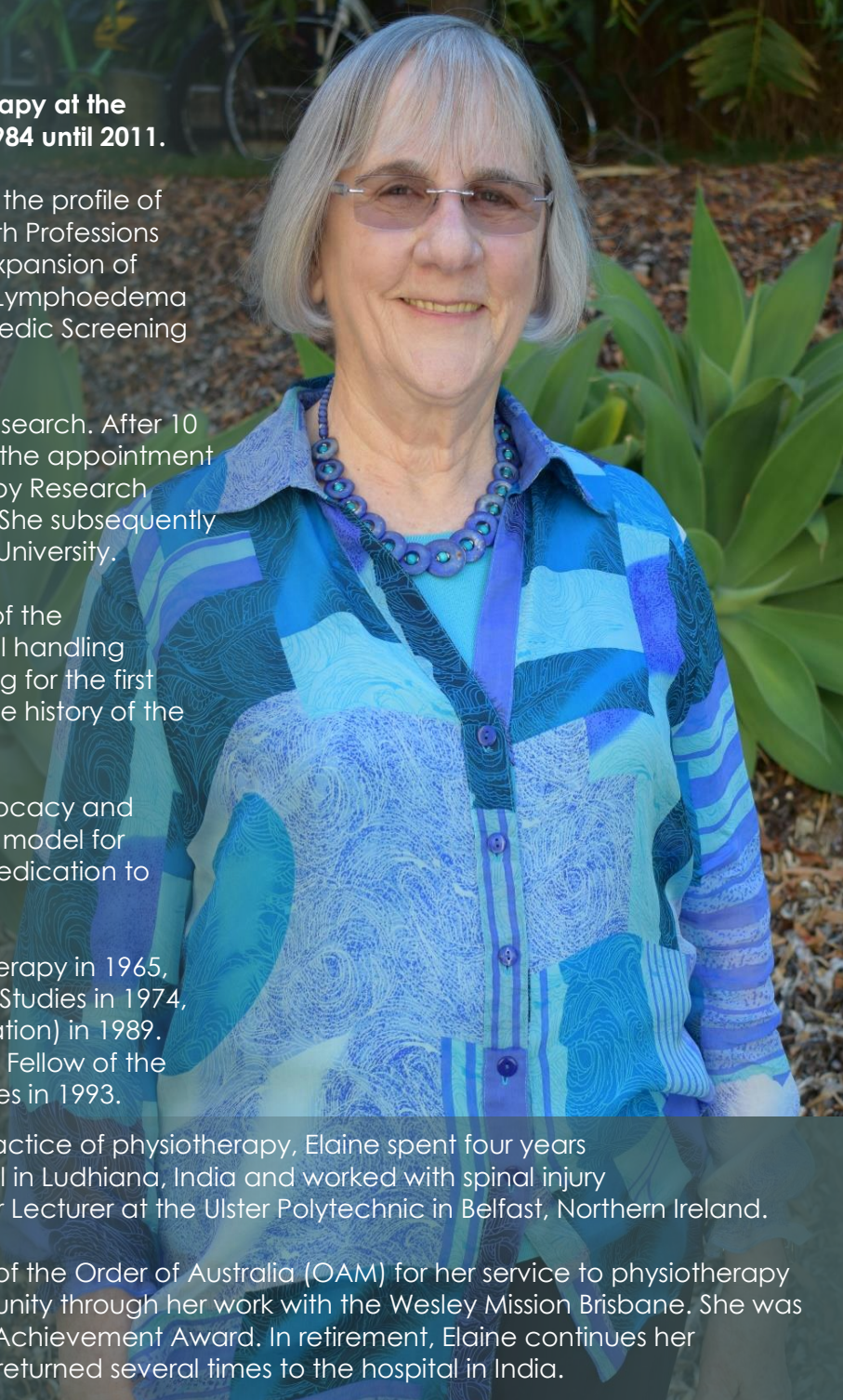
Elaine was instrumental in the establishment of the Occupational Rehabilitation Unit and manual handling programs in the hospital and also the planning for the first purpose built Physiotherapy Department in the history of the hospital.

Known for her remarkable commitment, advocacy and leadership, Elaine has been an excellent role model for physiotherapists by demonstrating her own dedication to quality patient care and life-long learning.

Since graduating with a Bachelor of Physiotherapy in 1965, Elaine completed a Bachelor of Educational Studies in 1974, and a Bachelor of Business (Health Administration) in 1989. She was the first Physiotherapist to become a Fellow of the Australian College of Health Service Executives in 1993.

With a passion for travel and the overseas practice of physiotherapy, Elaine spent four years at the Christian Medical College and Hospital in Ludhiana, India and worked with spinal injury patients in Lebanon, as well as being a Senior Lecturer at the Ulster Polytechnic in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

In 2007, Elaine was recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to physiotherapy and health administration, and to the community through her work with the Wesley Mission Brisbane. She was recognised by RBWH in 2009 with a Life Time Achievement Award. In retirement, Elaine continues her association with the Wesley Mission, and has returned several times to the hospital in India.



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