

VALE

MISS MARGARET BRAYTON

Miss Margaret Abigail Brayton was the first Executive Secretary of the then Commonwealth Nurses Federation, a position she held for twenty years from 1973 to 1993. Margaret took the position with the CNF after a long and distinguished career in the United Kingdom, including 13 years as Regional Nursing Officer of the South Eastern Regional Hospital Board in Scotland.



Margaret as a young nurse; Margaret receiving her OBE; Margaret at her 90th birthday celebrations.

Margaret died of natural causes on 30 April 2016 just a few months before her 97th birthday after spending many years in care. Margaret's funeral was held on 23 May 2016 and was well attended by many of her nursing colleagues, particularly from expatriate nursing organisations from the Caribbean who had been close to and supported Miss Brayton in her later years. Professor Kathleen McCourt (CNMF Vice President) and Jill Iliffe (CNMF Executive Secretary) attended the funeral. Also, in attendance was Ms Patricia Larby, the second Executive Secretary of the CNF.



Miss Brayton's funeral.

Margaret led a full and productive life of service to the nursing profession and the Commonwealth. What we will remember most is her warm and friendly disposition and her complete devotion to the causes she held dear. Margaret lived a long and adventurous life and she will be remembered with love and respect. Thank you so much to so many members of the CNMF who sent tributes following the death of Miss Brayton. These were forwarded to Miss Brayton's closest relative, her niece who found them very comforting to know that her aunt was held in such high regard by her nursing colleagues.

TRIBUTE TO MARGARET BRAYTON

7 July 1919 to 29 April 2016
on the occasion of her funeral service Monday 23 May 2016

My name is Jill Iliffe and I am the Executive Secretary of the CNMF, formerly the CNF. I am the 4th Executive Secretary of the CNMF. Margaret Brayton was the first, holding the position for 20 years from 1973 to 1993. I was privileged to meet Margaret on many occasions when we shared our reflections on working for the CNF. I also came to know Margaret through the letters she wrote as Executive Secretary of the CNF to national nursing associations across the Commonwealth, many of whom came into being as a direct result of Margaret's encouragement and nurturing.

On learning of Margaret's death, tributes from national nurses associations across the Commonwealth were sent to the CNMF from the United Kingdom, Cyprus, Malta, Uganda, Tanzania, Namibia, Guyana, Sri Lanka, Brunei Darussalam, Australia, Solomon Islands, Barbados, Bahamas, and Trinidad and Tobago. I would like to share some comments from those tributes.

Miss Brayton represented the best ambassador the CNMF could have had at that time. She always demonstrated concern for developing states and used her diplomatic and political skills to secure much needed assistance. Margaret's warmth and generosity and genuine concern for others were demonstrated throughout her life.

Through the CNF, Margaret pioneered an important professional association for nurses in the Commonwealth. We enjoyed many years of Margaret's warm friendship, wise advice, and professional support.

Despite a sense of loss, we are grateful and give thanks for the life of Miss Brayton. Her contributions and legacy to nursing and the Commonwealth will live on in the lives she has touched and the nursing leaders she has mentored as the baton is passed on.

Margaret took a great interest in Commonwealth educational co-operation and development, and we were proud to have her in membership of the Council for Education over a very long period. She was a regular attender at our meetings and always ready with a pertinent observation or probing question to visiting speakers: but what our members will remember most is her warm and friendly disposition and her complete devotion to the Commonwealth.

Margaret was devoted not only to the cause of nurses and midwives, but to the work of the modern Commonwealth. Long after retirement she proved her skill and spirit by delivering a baby at Cannon Street tube station, after seeing a pregnant woman in growing discomfort, and was happy to visit mother and baby, doing well, at Bart's Hospital the next day. I was glad to have known her.

MARGARET ABIGAIL BRAYTON

A life well lived

Margaret was a formidable lady within the Commonwealth. On the occasion of her 93rd birthday, Margaret took a 'walk down memory lane' and shared some highlights of her life, career and work within nursing and the Commonwealth. Some of Margaret's memories are recorded in the following narrative.

Margaret was born 7 July 1919 and started her career as a nursery school teacher. In 1939 she joined the British Red Cross as a volunteer and was posted to the Royal Naval Nursing Service working in the United Kingdom, Malta, and the Royal Navy base at Scapa Flow in Scotland. Margaret was one of the oldest surviving nurses who had worked on the hospital ships during the evacuation of Dunkirk.

After qualifying as a registered nurse, Margaret joined the Medical Relief Teams working throughout Europe and enjoyed VE day in Berlin. On her return to the UK she trained as a midwife in Edinburgh, and later as a children's nurse at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children.

Her next posting was with the Paediatric and Maternal Child Health Program in Newcastle after which she was appointed Principal Tutor at the West Cumberland School of Nursing. In 1954 she was granted a scholarship to study courses in maternal and child health in Canada and later at Yale University where she topped her class.

Margaret was then granted a British Red Cross and St. John's Fellowship to study Nursing Management and in 1960 was appointed Regional Nursing Officer for South East Region in Scotland, a post she held for thirteen years. She then went on to work with the World Health Organisation and UNICEF throughout Asia and the Far East.



Margaret on her 90th birthday surrounded by nursing colleagues and Commonwealth friends.



Margaret on her 90th birthday with the 4th Executive Secretary of the CNMF, Ms Jill Iliffe. Although increasing frail, Margaret's mind was sharp. She had a quick wit and a great sense of humour.

Margaret returned to London and on the 1 January 1973 was appointed the first Executive Secretary for the Commonwealth Nurses Federation, a post she held for 20 years. One of her first activities was to establish the West African College of Nursing.

In 1975, Margaret became a Councillor of the Royal Commonwealth Society and in 1981 its Vice President. She was also Chair of the Commonwealth Professional Association, an organisation she founded to encourage professionals to meet and exchange ideas and information.

In 1982, Margaret was elected a Freeman of the City of London, making her a member of the Guild of Freemen of the City of London. She was also awarded a Fellowship of the Royal Society of Arts.



Margaret on her 93rd birthday with Maura Buchanan, past President of the Royal College of Nursing UK and two expatriate nursing colleagues from Jamaica and Guyana.

Margaret was invited to join the Commonwealth Countries League and in 1987 was elected as the Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

After the end of her term as Chair, Margaret continued to represent the League at many Commonwealth high profile meetings nationally and internationally.

Margaret was also a very active member of Soroptimist International, Associated Country Women of the World, Women's Corona Society, Commonwealth Trust Women's Council, the Women's Advisory Council of the United National Association, and Friends of the Commonwealth Institute.

Margaret was awarded the MBE in the 1989 New Year's Honours List as Secretary of the Commonwealth Nurses Federation and was later appointed a member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. She also received a Distinguished Service Award from the Trinidad and Tobago Registered Nurses Association on the occasion of their 60th Anniversary (June 1991).

Margaret was also involved in pioneering work with the International Network Toward Smoke Free Hospitals and also enjoyed being a School Governor of her local Junior School.

Margaret represented many Commonwealth organisations travelling extensively throughout the Commonwealth, organising and attending many workshops, seminars, conferences and meetings. In Western Samoa she was made an Honorary Chief. With such a full and distinguished career in health, Margaret also found time to do volunteer work with many national and international Commonwealth organisations.

In 2000, Margaret was privileged to attend the Thanksgiving service at St Paul's Cathedral and the pageant of the Horse Guards Parade to celebrate Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother's 100th birthday.

Throughout her life, Margaret's hobbies were as exciting and plentiful as her career. She had a passion for trains, Australian wines, hill climbing and all genres of the Arts and archeology which led her to take part in the dig on the London Wall. Margaret was also an active member of St Stephen and St John Church.

Margaret was a mentor to many and gave unstintingly of her time and energies to help others, particularly in women's organisations and in advancing opportunities for young people. Margaret was a good raconteur, much loved and respected. Vale Margaret and thanks – a life well lived indeed and a place in CNMF history and in our hearts.



Margaret receives a visit from close nursing colleagues from the Trinidad and Tobago Registered Nurses Association, Mrs Valerie Alleyne-Rawlins and Mrs Kathy-Ann Greenidge-Ottley.