

Farewell, Carolyn! *By the international TOS administration*



It is with great sadness that we farewell Carolyn Harrod of Brisbane, Australia, a veritable star in our TOS firmament, who passed away on October 14. She was an outstanding volunteer, both within Australia and at international level.

Carolyn had a passion for human rights, for the protection of the environment and for helping the underprivileged, expressed by an immense professionalism and enveloped in a gracious and modest exterior. She quickly perceived the overall, long term picture of the humanitarian service plans, projects and problems presented to her; she understood organisational structure and management, she had superb listening skills and was sensitive to and respectful of the dignity of every person she met.

Our most loving thoughts go to her husband Geoffrey, to her sisters Barbara and Pamela and their families, as well as to all those in various service fields where she was highly respected and is greatly missed. Carolyn, we wish you God speed.

Carolyn as part of the international team

Many volunteers work in bursts of enthusiasm – under the adrenalin rush of providing emergency relief, for example. Carolyn was dedicated to the long haul. She was selfless in her devotion to helping others. Her respect for each and every person was genuine. She never waded into situations to ‘fix’ people’s lives for them, telling them what to do. She saw it as a privilege to have the opportunity to be of assistance.



Carolyn and Nancy working together at Olcott in the USA in 2013



Carolyn at Olcott with Deepa Padhi and Dorothy Bell

Carolyn and Geoff joined the international TOS team in 2007 designing and creating our website and also our e-newsletter which they produced until the end of 2014. Carolyn picked up the TOS's strategic plan, put together by fellow Australian, Dorothy Bell, and ensured that

the team followed it over its five-year life.

She wrote a lot of the resource material to be found on our website and in our Handbook, which she also designed. She helped considerably with the



Carolyn at the TOS conference in the USA in 2008



Carolyn guiding participants through the TOS conference programme at Olcott in 2008

development of another important document entitled *Principles of Organisation*, of which the first draft was written by Dorothy. Carolyn master-minded and led the TOS Conference held at Olcott in the USA in July 2013, all the while acting as National

Coordinator, then Treasurer, of the TOS in Australia and some of the time Coordinator of the TOS team in her home city of Brisbane. Carolyn was both a



Carolyn speaking at the TOS Conference at Olcott 2013



Carolyn, Geoff and Diana working on an issue of our e-Newsletter

leader and a grass roots worker. When she retired from her rich professional life in the field of education in 2011, the International Secretary said to her, “Wonderful! Perhaps you’ll be free now to give even more time to the TOS at international

level.” “Yes, I will,” she replied, “but you need to know that my first priority is spending more time helping people directly, one on one, here in Brisbane.”



TOS conferences are not all talk! Carolyn and other participants give a thorough cleaning to the kitchen at Olcott in 2008



What an amazing team Carolyn and Geoff have made!

Carolyn as part of the TOS team in Australia

Writes Jean Carroll, Carolyn's successor as Coordinator of the TOS in Australia:

"Carolyn was a true role model for us all. She seemed to have nurtured her spirit through serving; she relished work, yet it was never work for her. She did it with joy and amazing vitality. This attitude seemed a gift from a higher source. We will all miss her greatly.

She was so willing to share her vast knowledge with me when I took over in 2012 after her seven years in office. We laughed a lot together. I recall a time when the two of us did the catering for a TS Science group seminar at Springbrook Theosophical Centre as a fundraiser for the TOS. We worked all week together in the kitchen, laughing at how similar we were. Tidiness was our motto. We wrapped our arms around each another one day in a burst of hilarity. Fond memories for me. Carolyn was a vessel for the higher self and it showed in her actions."



Carolyn often helped with the catering of TS events at Springbrook Theosophical Centre. It was an expression of her commitment to the TS as a TOS member.

Carolyn became the National Coordinator of the TOS in Australia in 2005, professionalising it from the ground up. She started by taking advantage of the natural opportunity her appointment provided to re-examine the role of National Coordinator and the contribution that it could make to the work of the TOS in Australia. The members helped her clarify the functions of the role and then she simply set about fulfilling them.



Carolyn at Springbrook Theosophical Centre where she often organised TOS work parties to beautify the grounds

1. She significantly developed the organisation as an avenue for service, providing a sense of direction and coordination.
2. She facilitated communication across local groups, increasing their number and drawing Theosophical Society members and friends into the network.
3. With help from Geoff, Carolyn set up email groups, Skype conferences, a national website and an excellent national newsletter.



Carolyn at Australian TOS AGM

4. Recognising the importance of sound foundations for the organisation, she led a revision of its by-laws, an undertaking requiring considerable thought and good judgement. She ensured that there was full consultation so that the review process was genuinely democratic.
5. She brought in the notion of National Projects within the TOS in Australia so that there is follow-through over the long term and an intelligent tracking of the progress of service endeavours.
6. In order to make reliable recommendations of overseas projects for support, she obtained as much information as possible, asking appropriate questions. In this

way she identified more and more opportunities for service action for TOS members and friends across the country.

7. Under her guidance, TOS members in Australia tutored refugees in English, volunteered in aged-care centres and cancer support groups, worked in 'soup kitchens' for the homeless, helped in animal shelters, collected for relief appeals, knitted knee rugs for nursing homes, put together packs of clothes and toys for babies and children going into care and supported a refuge for homeless women. Through seminars, lectures and petitions they raised awareness about social, environmental and animal welfare issues within Australia.



Carolyn & Jean working together with joie de vivre

8. During all this time – and well before – Carolyn participated in the hands-on activities of her local Brisbane TOS group, including the reclamation of industrial wasteland, major gardening and building maintenance work and a great variety of creative fundraising projects. She was an excellent cook, regularly devoting weekends to catering for the workers at volunteer events. Carolyn also acted as coordinator of the TOS in Brisbane, streamlining procedures and expanding the

number of projects undertaken. One of her favourite projects was fundraising through cultural events such as concerts and art exhibitions.

9. During her time running the TOS in Australia, Carolyn provided a central point for economically sending bank drafts for international donations and more importantly, a consultation process for the selection of causes. She helped put in place a custodial fund for international donations to the TOS in Pakistan where circumstances were particularly volatile after the events of September 11, 2001. Her commitment to the education of young girls in that country was notable.

Carolyn handed over to Jean, her successor, an organisation that was healthy and harmonious – no mean feat in a non-profit organisation run entirely by volunteers. To ensure continuity and support, she accepted the post of Treasurer in January 2012, retiring from it only in January 2018.



At work: Carolyn (Treasurer), Travis James (Secretary) and Jean Carroll (Coordinator of the TOS in Australia)

The story goes on and on!

Carolyn was highly regarded for her outstanding professional contribution in the field of education in the state of Queensland in various literacy, syllabus, curriculum and early

childhood initiatives. A colleague writes: “Her influence extended far beyond what could be expected of a senior education officer. She was one of the significant influences shaping quality education in Queensland across schooling sectors.”

Carolyn also made major contributions in service organisations such as Alpha Delta Kappa, an international honorary organisation of women educators dedicated to educational excellence, altruism and world understanding. She was an active member of the Brisbane chapter that provided significant support to the education of young women in society. Her last major involvement was as a trainer of facilitators for the organisation FRIENDS Resilience that offers social and emotional skills programmes designed to build life-long resilience in individuals, families and communities.

Carolyn – we salute you and thank you! We offer our hopes for your perfect happiness, now and always.



Farewell, Carolyn!