



University of Queensland 2nd year medical students, 1937. Lorna Archibald (front row, far right).

# Doctor's lasting legacy

*From delivering medical aid during the war, to becoming one of the first women in Queensland to obtain a medical degree: Dr Lorna Archibald (Class of 1931) was an intrepid trailblazer. Lorna led an extraordinary life, marked by intelligence and generosity. She has had an incredible impact on the Somerville House community, beginning with her own days as an excellent student and continuing with her ongoing legacy through the Dr Lorna Archibald Memorial Scholarship. Created with a generous \$300,000 gift from Lorna's Will, the Scholarship was established in 1998. It allows outstanding students, who could not otherwise attend the School, an opportunity to access the same Somerville House education that helped Lorna become a leading dermatologist and inspirational teacher.*

The youngest of four siblings, Lorna attended Somerville House with her two sisters. She began her schooling at the original school site in Erneton on Wickham Terrace in 1919 and was one of the pupils who made the move to Vulture Street in 1920. Lorna's school career was a busy, involved and successful one, demonstrating her drive and intelligence. Not only academically gifted, Lorna was also Captain of the Netball team, Treasurer of the Sports Club and the 1931 School Captain. She won the School's highest citizenship award, the Lorna Robertson Award, an early indication of her generosity of spirit and embodiment of Somerville House's values of *Honour Before Honours*.

When Lorna entered The University of Queensland in 1932, there was no medical degree course in Queensland. Instead, she enrolled in a Bachelor of Science, which she was awarded in 1935. In 1937, she received a Master of Science with Honours in Zoology. By then the Queensland Medical School was established, and she graduated with an MBBS in 1942. She was one of only a few women in her cohort.

Australia was in the midst of WWII, and all-male graduates were snapped up by the Defence Forces. This provided the few female graduates with new and exciting options that wouldn't normally have been available to women. Imagine this, a recently graduated young

woman navigating the blacked-out streets of Brisbane, finding her way to patients in need as a locum (a stand-in doctor). This was one of Lorna's many memorable experiences. She also worked for a period at the venereal disease clinic, which was almost unheard of for a woman at that time. Out of this experience arose her interest in skin diseases, prompting further study to become a dermatologist.

By 1949, Lorna had received a Diploma of Dermatological Medicine from the University of Sydney, and her long and admired career as a teacher and practitioner was underway. Undergraduates and young doctors found her strict but fair. She was

devoted to her discipline, definite in her views and an excellent teacher. Her influence on the Somerville House community was immediate: Dr Wendy Harley (nee Hoskin, Class of 1948) was inspired by Lorna to herself become a dermatologist. Dr David Weedon, grandson of first-day pupil, Minnie Connah (nee Wilson, Class of 1902), said Lorna was the doyen of Brisbane dermatology for close to four decades. Lorna was a Foundation Member of the Dermatological Association of Australia (DAA) and was President of the DAA when it was replaced by the Australasian College of Dermatologists.

Even after her passing, Lorna continues to inspire and support Somerville House students.

The Somerville House Foundation honours her bequest through the Dr Lorna Archibald Memorial Scholarship, which has grown considerably over the years. The Scholarship is needs-based and awarded to a boarding student who demonstrates academic excellence, supporting them throughout their entire schooling from Years 7 to 12. Lorna's generosity is deeply appreciated by the students who have received support over the years. The fifty percent scholarship has given these students access to opportunities that have improved their education and also instilled them with the same impressive qualities Lorna had: determination, community-spirit and thoughtful intelligence. It's also led to a richer and more diverse Somerville House community, encouraging students from a variety of backgrounds to bring new perspectives and experiences to the School.

Lorna's legacy will live on for generations.

Gifts in Will greatly benefit the future of young students and their educational opportunities. Consider including a Gift in Will to students through the Somerville House Foundation and learn more about the transformational opportunities these gifts can provide.

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*For a confidential discussion about how to leave a gift in your Will or how you can establish a scholarship, please contact Ms Petrina Gilmore, Director of Philanthropy, on (07) 3033 9289.*