

Information Sheet No. 33



City of
Greater Geraldton
Regional Library



Heritage Services

Geraldton Regional Library

JIM TREVASKIS – The Complete Educator

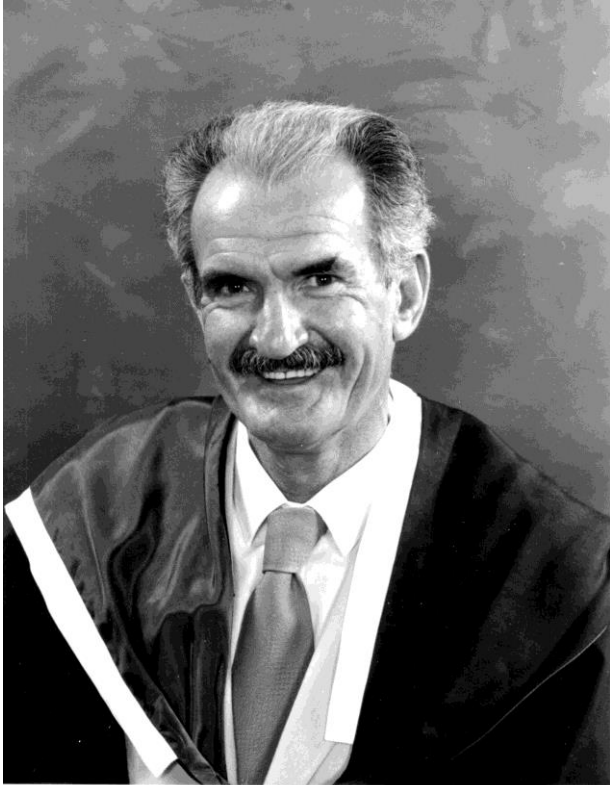
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|---------------------|---|
| 1928, May 6 | - Born in Perth, WA. |
| 1951, Nov 10 | - Married Helen McIntyre in Perth. |
| 1956, Feb | - Senior Master of English, Geraldton High School. |
| 1961 | - Master of Arts degree, University of WA. |
| 1963-1964 | - Fellowship at University of London. |
| 1968, Feb | - Principal, Geraldton Senior High School. |
| 1970-1980 | - Geraldton Town Councillor. |
| 1972-1973 | - Deputy Mayor of Geraldton. |
| 1974 | - Fellowship, Australian College of Education. |
| 1986 | - Award: “The Complete Educator”. |
| 1986, Dec 19 | - Retired after 19 years as Principal, Geraldton Senior High School. |

Affectionately known as “Jack Trak” to two generations of students, Jim Trevaskis first came to Geraldton in 1956. His historical connection, however, goes back to 1875 when his grandfather and great-grandfather landed in Port Gregory from Cornwall and headed for the lead mines of the Northampton district.

Born in Perth in 1928, his own education included the Perth Boys’ School, Perth Modern School, the University of WA and Claremont Teachers College. After teaching at several country towns, Jim came to Geraldton High School in 1956 as the Senior Master of English. Geraldton High School was an intimate school of 250 students and because it was the only government high school north of Perth, it catered for students from the Northern Wheatbelt, the Murchison, the Gascoyne and the Kimberley districts. This geographical diversity of students created a special ethos, which greatly appealed to Jim and he formed the ambition to become Principal of Geraldton High School. This happened in 1968 after serving as Headmaster of High Schools at Bullsbrook, Donnybrook and Margaret River. During his time away from Geraldton, Jim was awarded a Fellowship at the University of London Institute of Education, where he studied for a year and visited many English Schools.

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Jim Trevaskis. Photograph courtesy of Jim Trevaskis.

Geraldton Senior High School was now a very large school and by 1972 had some 1,400 students. Relief came in 1975 with the establishment of John Willcock High School. Throughout Jim's Principalship he emphasised academic excellence as well as supporting a wide range of options and extra-curricular activities. The school's wide-ranging programmes received Australia-wide exposure when Jim appeared on the ABC's nationally televised "The Great Debate".

Jim was interested in all students and always enjoyed teaching. By choice he kept up some classroom teaching until he retired. He also enjoyed "teaching teachers" and shared his skills and experiences with all members of staff. As an Acting Superintendent, 1975 to 1980, he also passed on encouragement and expertise to many teachers and Principals from Carnarvon to Carnamah.

Jim always involved himself in the community and musical activities of country towns. In 1970 he successfully contested the North Ward in the Geraldton Town Council elections. He served three terms from 1970 to 1980 and was Deputy Mayor from 1972 to 1973. Jim gained Council support for the construction of a purpose-built Maritime Museum and then served 20 years on the Museum Committee. His other special interests included Town Planning, the Town Library and the planning of the Queens Park Theatre.

Jim and Helen's own family, Peter (School Captain 1972), Brendon (School Captain 1974) and Nina, were educated at Geraldton Senior High School and proceeded to Universities in Perth.

In 1986 the Director-General of Education, Dr Bob Vickery, presented Jim with an Award of Merit for being "The Complete Educator". He claimed that Geraldton had been most fortunate to have had Jim's drive, vitality and talents for so long.

However, Jim's most valued commendation came from an ex-student, Ernie Dingo, who said: "He looked for the good in all students. He made everyone feel special."



In retirement Jim has been an invaluable voluntary contributor in the Geraldton community, including playing an integral role in the Oral History programme delivered by the Geraldton Regional Library. Jim has interviewed numerous local residents, making sure their stories are preserved for future generations. Jim himself has been interviewed for oral history projects such as the Voiceprints of Geraldton project, by Bill Bunbury, and the Original Railway Station project, by Trish Parker. In 2013, Jim's efforts were recognized in the City of Greater Geraldton Heritage Awards.

References

*Text taken from **Geraldton: 150 Years, 150 Lives**, Local Studies Department, Geraldton Regional Library, 2001, p. 168.*

Copies are available from the Library, 37 Marine Terrace, Geraldton (PO Box 101, Geraldton, WA, 6531) for \$27.50 (plus \$6.50 postage and handling).

