



Anna Teresa Brennan

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Lawyer and equal rights advocate

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Anna Teresa Brennan was 83 when she died in 1962, a remarkable woman from a remarkable Catholic family. Born in Central Victoria, she studied law at the University of Melbourne, became its first woman law graduate and went on, in 1911, to become the second woman to be admitted to the Bar in Victoria. She appeared in her first court case in 1913.

A devout Catholic, social reformer and women's activist, she belonged to many organisations, such as the influential National Council of Women, the Lyceum Club and the international St Joan's Alliance, a Catholic organisation that 'championed ... humanitarian causes, especially those that affected women'. She was also a founding member of the Catholic Women's Social Guild.

Her brother Frank, in whose law firm she worked for fifty years, was a Labor politician, a pacifist and an anti-conscriptionist. Her brothers Thomas, William and Henry were journalists. Another brother Michael (also buried in this plot) worked in the Crown Law Department and Richard, who remained in the Bendigo area, was secretary of the Strathfieldsaye Shire.

Active to the end, Anna Brennan died after a fall at the University of Melbourne on the way to a lecture on nuclear fission and subsequently contracting pneumonia. She was a member of an influential Catholic family, heavily involved in social justice issues and a pioneering woman lawyer.

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The above information is based on research conducted in 2011-2012 and is presented in good faith by the Friends of Coburg Cemetery. Should family members wish to upgrade existing monuments within this cemetery please email enquiries@gmct.com.au