

Biographical Note

Suzanne Brugger, BA(Hon) Lond, PhD Adel
Award of Companion of the University

This year the Flinders Branch of the University of the Third Age celebrates its 10th anniversary.

The University of the Third Age is a body founded to meet the needs of the growing senior population to continue to pursue, extra non-award based, academic paths of interest to them and to extend the minds of this growing section of our population.

It is based on voluntary work both in its administration, in the development of curriculum and in the delivery of lectures. Retired academics, distinguished lecturers eminent in their fields, willingly give their time to promote the aims of the University of the Third Age. It is a quite unique organisation, evidence of Flinders commitment to community service. The foundation of a branch of the University of the Third Age at Flinders University was largely due to the efforts of Dr Suzanne Brugger.

Towards the end of 1988 Dr Brugger was asked to join a working party set up to investigate the possibility of developing a branch of the University of the Third Age based at and supported by Flinders. She had had considerable experience working with the Australian College for Seniors.

At the Preliminary session of the working party on October 25, she was elected Chairperson – a role she continued to fill until 1990 when a final report was submitted. The working party concentrated on the areas of: governance and administration, through the development of a constitution, an organisational structure and support services; educational matters, through the development of a teaching program, organisation of lecturers, and development of educational aims and objectives; and publicity and public relations.

In the first part of 1990 a number of open meetings were held throughout the southern suburbs. Dr Brugger spoke at these to promote enthusiasm for the project and to provide information. A survey was conducted among those attending to find out what their interests and expectations might be.

On the basis of these summaries it was decided to go ahead with the project and Dr Brugger arranged a program of courses and activities to run from September 1990 to the end of May 1991.

The first volunteer committee (the Flinders University of the Third Age Steering Committee) took over from the University's working party and prepared the branch constitution for presentation to the first general meeting in March 1991. The Steering Committee also made arrangements for an official launch of the branch on campus as part of the Flinders Silver Jubilee celebrations. Dr Brugger was a member of the Steering Committee as its liaison person with the University.

At the first general meeting in March 1991, the membership asked Dr Brugger to be the inaugural President of Flinders University of the Third Age. During Dr Brugger's presidential year, which involved the usual near fatal but always survived crises of any fledgling organisation, she prepared the next two programs.

During the whole of the life of the University of the Third Age Dr Brugger has made a point of giving a course in every program (generally three a year), varying from 3-4 sessions per program to long courses - 13 weeks on Islam and 9 weeks on the history of Chinese art.

It is fitting that we recognise the contribution which Dr Suzanne Brugger has made to the University and the community through her work with the Flinders University Branch of the University of the Third Age, by awarding her the title of Companion of the University.