

GLADYS ELPHICK

By Amber

Gladys Elphick was a proud, Kaurna, and Narungga descent Aboriginal. Gladys was known for being the founding president of the Council of Aboriginal Women of South Australia. She had many jobs over the years, she won an award for a shop-floor invention and was named South Australian Aboriginal of the year in 1984.

Gladys Elphick was born on the 27th of August 1904 in Adelaide, South Australia. She grew up in Point Pearce Reserve, Yorke Peninsula, living there for the first thirty-five years of her life. Before she moved there, she lived with her parents and her brother. She then moved to live with her great-grandmother in Yorke Peninsula at only 8 months old. As a result, she was closer to her great-grandmother than her parents. Educated at a local school, as a child she rode horses, swam, and played sports. In 1916, at only twelve years old, she decided to leave school and work at a station dairy. She was also taught on how to be a midwife by elderly women.

Now at the age of seventeen on 1922, 13th of June, Gladys married Walter Stanford Hughes. They had two sons, Timothy, and Alfred Hughes. Unfortunately, her husband died four years later after having their 2nd child. Two years after her husband's death, she moved back to Adelaide and lived with her cousin, Gladys O'Brien. She found work there as a domestic. But she worked for only a year of being a domestic, then moving on to work at the

Islington Munitions Factory, making shells. There she won her first award for making a shell with one tool instead of two. On 2nd of December 1940, at St. Ignatius Catholic Church, Norwood, she remarried to Frederick Joseph Elphick.

Although Gladys had very little education (leaving when she was in grade three), she became involved in Aboriginal affairs after moving to Adelaide. In 1940s Mrs Elphick joined the Aborigines Advancement League of South Australia and in the 1960s served on It's activities committee (which organised social and sport events.) As founding president of the Council of Aboriginal Women of South Australia, she worked to raise the status of Indigenous people in the Community. They established a women's shelter and health service in Adelaide. In 1973, the women's council changed its name to the Aboriginal Council of South Australia, they included men to the Council. That year the Aboriginal Community Centre was established to the house of various services. Gladys was elected as treasurer and was later made the life member of the centre.

In 1966, Mrs Elphick was the member of the South Australian Aboriginal Affairs Board. In the 1960s she had helped to arrange evening art classes, conducted at Challa Gardens Primary School by John Morley. These programs were established in 1973 of the College of Aboriginal Education. In the same year, the Aboriginal Community Centre was established in Wakefield Street, Adelaide, with

Gladys Elphick as treasurer. It provided legal aid, housing, medical help, and child care. In 1977, along with Maud Tongerie and Bert Clarke, she started the Aboriginal Medical Service with the help of her local doctor. A highly respected elder, in 1984 she was named south Australian aboriginal of the year. She died 19 of January 1988, at the age of 83 years old. In Daw Park, Adelaide, and was buried in Centennial Park cemetery.

Gladys Elphick was an elder of Kaurna and Narungga descent, known as Aunty Glad to her community. Gladys had a lively sense of humour, a highly respected elder, she was named South Australian Aboriginal of the year. She died 19 of January 1988, at Daw Park, Adelaide, buried in Centennial Park Cemetery. She was the founding president of the Aboriginal Council of South Australia. Gladys Elphick was an aboriginal woman who should be respected by many people.