



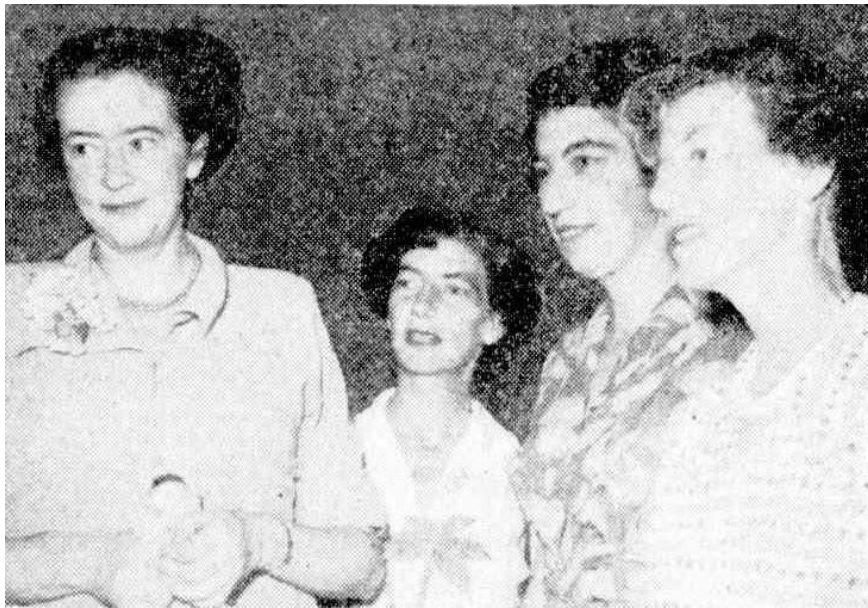
Gwen Ewens (*Daily News*, 29 February 1936, p.16)

**Gwenyth Alberta Ewens** (1912-1995) was born 7 January 1912 at *Aldinga*, 9 Dean Street, Claremont. Ethyl Maud Albert had married accountant Arthur Pickett Ewens at the Wesley Church Fremantle in 1910, and the couple had two daughters, Gwenyth in 1912 and Mavis Sarah born in August 1916 at *Aldinga*. In the 1920s-30s Gwen's name was often in the social pages of the newspapers, she wrote letters and contributed puzzles, her attendance was reported at various functions, she played piano at musical evenings. Gwen attended Methodist Ladies College, and art was more than just an interest for her as she won several drawing competitions.

On leaving school Gwen began training in commercial art but found herself drawn into the more mathematical field of drafting. She was employed as a drafter by the Lands Department, but was one of two staff 'bid farewell' in mid-1932, possibly due to a lack of work during the Great Depression. Indicative of Gwen's interests was her advertisement in 1933 seeking a 'pen-friend': *Miss Gwenyth Ewens, Aldinga, Dean Street, Claremont, WA. : Either sex, 20-26, in any part of the world. Any branch of art, native flora, literature and travel.*

Gwen took first place in the Judges Awards at the Royal Show in 1933 for 'model drawing in pencil or charcoal'. She gained work with a city firm of shop-fitters to design shop fronts, display cases, general office fittings and lead lights. In order to further her skills and improve her ability as a designer Gwen was one of a very small number of women to enrol to study in her preferred field at Perth Technical College in the 1930s. She went on to study glass in building construction and illumination for a number of years and became an authority in the field of how glass could be used in the Twentieth Century home for structural, functional and decorative purposes.

Gwen had been a member of the Architectural Students Association by at least 1934, and was still a member in 1950 when she was jokingly noted as the 'Chief Glazier' of the organisation. She wrote an article for the ASA magazine *Phi* in 1950, 'Heat Transmission through Glazing', that displayed a considerable knowledge of the science behind the manufacturing of modern glazing and its usage in construction. During 1951 she spent three months in the eastern States of Australia researching construction methods, lighting conditions and the application of colour in building. Her views were noted in the press, and Gwen was obviously taking a very specialised pathway in her career development.

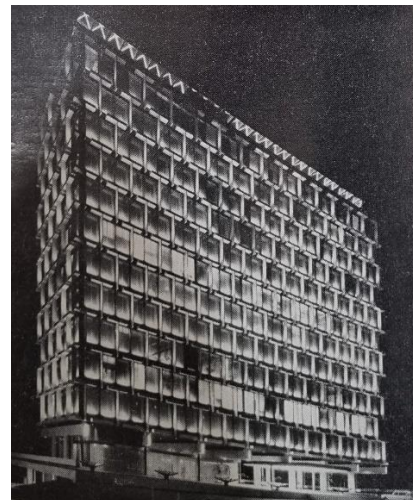
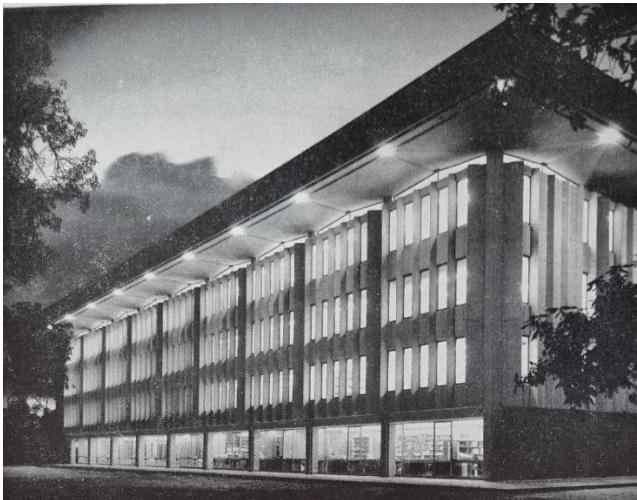


Pictured enjoying a tour of the Art Gallery from left to right: Gwen Ewens, Doreen Stevens, Margaret Feilman and Kath Jarvis (*Western Mail*, 7 February 1952, p.35).

She was awarded a Fellowship to the Lighting Engineers of Australia for her significant contributions to the art/science of illumination. The Western Australian chapter of the Illuminating Engineering Society of Australia and New Zealand Ltd has an annual Gwenyth Ewens Memorial Lecture, and the following Citation is to be read out by the person introducing the lecturer each time the Memorial Lecture is given in order to remind the audience of who she was and what she has done for the Society:

*Gwenyth Ewens was born in 1916 at Claremont, Western Australia, where she attended the Methodist Ladies College. She studied survey drafting and architecture at the Perth Technical College and took a course in History of Architecture at the University of Western Australia. She became a member of the*

*Architectural Association of Western Australia. She specialised in glass research and did practical work at Pilkington Bros., St Helens, England. After a study tour of The Netherlands and Germany organised by the two respective governments, she became a member of the Housing Centre Trust in London. She was, for 15 years, a member of the Inter-Society Colour Council of USA. Gwen Ewens was a tireless lecturer on architectural design, interior decoration, lighting, colour and vision; lecturing at the University of Western Australia for the Adult Education Board, and the Technical Education Division of the Department of Education in Western Australia. She presented her first paper 'On the production, properties and utilisation of glass' to the IES in Western Australia in 1949. In 1951, she joined the IES WA Council and served on most of the Council's committees. She acted as secretary when the need arose, contributing her vast experience in Society affairs to the continuity of the IES in Western Australia.*



Photos used to illustrate Gwen Ewens' article 'Architectural Lighting': Trinity College Chapel, Reid Library UWA, Council House Perth (*The Architect*, September 1964, pp.29-34).

*She was elected on the National Council in November 1966 and remained on the Council to November 1972, when she retired from the National Council and, in 1975, also from the IES Council in Western Australia because of pressing family commitments. Gwen was dedicated to the IES and all the Society stands for. She was for many years the Western Australia representative on the National Lighting Education Board, and the State editor of the IES Lighting Review (now "Lighting" magazine). Every five years, Gwen Ewens would become the rallying point for the IES national conferences and conventions in Western Australia. She often acted on the program committee, meetings committee, social committee, facilities committee, publicity committee, and as public relations officer, all in one. On 20 November 1975 Gwen was elected a Life Fellow of the Illuminating Engineering Societies of Australia in recognition of her work "as a member of the National Council and, in particular, as a long-standing supporter of that Council in her home state, Western Australia". On behalf of the Society, a small number of members attended Gwen's funeral in Perth on 21 February 1995 to pay their final respects to this fine lady. In a letter to the IES Western Australia Council 4 years before her death, accompanied by a sum of money, Gwen Ewens wrote "I wish to contribute something to help promote the Society to advance their aims.....I would, also, like to focus some attention with regard to the human element in the lighting field today. This may require the co-operation of allied professions".*

In 1987 Gwenyth contacted the Fremantle City Council wishing to donate \$1,000 to start an art competition for Fremantle children. The inaugural Gwenyth Ewens Art Award in 1989 themed 'Historic Buildings in Fremantle', was open to high school students. She was so delighted with the enthusiastic response, with over sixty entries from three local schools, that she set up a \$4,000 trust fund and the competition became an annual Fremantle event. She had set up a similar trust for young artists in Claremont six years previous.

A remarkably benevolent, but little-known woman, Gwenyth Ewens died at Cottesloe 15 February 1995, aged 83, and was buried at the Karrakatta Cemetery. Gwen left a \$75,000 bequest to the City of Fremantle to continue to fund the annual art competition for primary school children. Each year the Fremantle Library approaches local primary schools to encourage year 5 and 6 students to submit a piece of art depicting an iconic building in the area.

References:

- 'Marriage', *Western Mail*, 21 May 1910, p.31 (Arthur Pickett Ewens and Ethel Maud Albert).
- 'Births', *The West Australian*, 9 January 1912, p.1 (birth of Gwen).
- 'Births', *The West Australian*, 8 August 1916, p.1 (birth of Mavis).
- 'Prize winners for drawing competition', *Daily News*, 27 March 1926, p.11.
- 'University Examinations', *The West Australian*, 16 December 1929, p.21 (MLC examinations).
- 'To Bid Farewell', *The West Australian*, 5 July 1932, p.14 (from Lands Department).
- 'Pen-friends wanted', *The Australian Woman's Mirror*, 4 April 1933, p.47 (Vol 9, no.19).
- 'Judges Awards at the Royal Show', *Daily News*, 10 October 1933, p.4.
- 'Architectural Association Executive and Members', *Tee Square Journal*, 1937, p.5.
- Gwenyth Ewens, 'Heat Transmission through Glazing', *Phi*, 1950, pp.40-43.
- 'New Era of Color', *Sunday Times*, 9 September 1951, p.21.
- 'Glass Important in Modern Home', *The West Australian*, 25 March 1952, p.9.
- Gwenyth A. Ewens MIES, 'Architectural Lighting', *The Architect*, September 1964, pp.29-34.
- 'IES Awards and Memorials, other than lighting awards', Illuminating Engineering Society of Australia and New Zealand Ltd, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 12 July 2013.
- Kristi McNulty, 'Gwenyth Ewens', Fremantle History Society newsletter, July 2021, pp.6-7.

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