

In Memory of Ella O. Campbell, DNZM, FRIH

Renowned botanist Dame Ella Campbell died in Palmerston North on 24 July at the age of 93. She was Massey University's first woman staff member and the only woman staff member for many years. She joined Massey in March 1945, lecturing horticulture and agriculture students about plant morphology and anatomy. Her primary interest was the study of liverworts. Her vast collection of the species is held at the University's herbarium, named the Dame Ella Campbell Herbarium in a ceremony earlier this year, attended by Dame Ella.

Dame Ella travelled widely overseas in pursuit of liverworts. She also became an internationally accredited orchid judge, and was a long-time

member of the Manawatu Orchid Society. She was multi-lingual, and once delivered a speech in German at the 300th anniversary of the Berlin Botanical gardens. She remained on the teaching staff of the University until her "retirement" in 1976, but continued to work as a research associate for more than two decades, publishing a substantial volume of work before finally retiring at age 90. She was awarded a DSc from the University of Otago and a Fellowship of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture in 1976. She became a Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 1997, as "a pioneer in the field of university botanic research," and received the Massey Medal in 1992.

At her funeral service, held in Palmerston North on 29 July, friend and colleague Associate Professor David Fountain spoke of Dame Ella's work and well-known idiosyncrasies, including her absolute focus on "her beloved bryophytes". To his knowledge, she never possessed a television set and rarely listened to the radio. Dame Ella was also a scholar of mosses and wetland plants, evidence of which springs freshly from the pages of that lovely DSIR book *Botany of the Manawatu District New Zealand* by A.E. Esler (1978): "In 1940 the *Equisetum* [*E. arvense*, field horsetail] was inadvertently brought into nursery land in Palmerston North with sand from Wanganui and rapidly established itself. It grew vegetatively extremely well and was regarded as an ornamental plant until I identified it in 1949 and warned of its aggressive and persistent nature. The *Equisetum*, although kept under control, has never been completely eradicated" (p.185).

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Dame Ella Campbell