

Barbara SARGEANT nee EVANS

Olympic Swimmer

NGHS 1952-1957

Born 1940

Died 23rd June 2021

OBITUARY

Barbara came to Newcastle Girls' High School in 1952, from the Junction Primary School. Her sister Janice was already at NGHS and the two Evans girls were great strengths in the School swimming team.



Barbara was also a Champion runner, winning the School Athletics, Intermediate and Senior Championships in 1955. She was Parnell House Captain & a Senior Prefect.

During what should have been her final leaving year at school, at only 16 years old, she was selected for the Olympic Training & Selection camp in Townsville and was then chosen, as the Australian 200 yards Breaststroke Champion, to represent Australia, in that event, at the Olympic Games that year, in Melbourne.

We were, in our school community, so very proud to have “one of ours” become an Olympian. Even more excitement at school, when the Olympics were in progress. The reports were, in those days only heard, (not seen!!) “live”, on the radio. Our Headmistress, Miss Doris Wallent, arranged for the whole school and Staff to listen to the broadcast of Barbara’s race in our Assembly Hall. It was such an occasion.

A “first” (in those days) to have a school girl compete in the Olympics. The pride and excitement within the school for Barbara, was huge & justified.

Her Olympic year had taken almost all of what was to be her Leaving year.

Barbara returned to school the next year to complete 5th Year & her Leaving Certificate. She gained a highly coveted Teachers Training Scholarship to study Physical Education at Sydney Teachers College and pursued a most successful career as P.E. Teacher.

She was an honoured Guest Speaker in 2006 at the Annual NGHS Ex-Students’reunion – chosen, as the Speaker & honoured by her 1956 Leaving year, as they celebrated their 50th year since leaving NGHS. Barb’s chosen topic for her address was, “My Olympic Year”. She was a most entertaining speaker – her address gave an insight into what she’d enjoyed and endured during that memorable year. She was a great

Speaker. She spoke with a quiet and modest dignity and humour which was so very characteristic of Barb's lovely nature. A truly well loved, admired and respected ex-Student of Newcastle Girls' High School.

Valette Barbara.

Robin Gordon. NGHS 1955-59. NGHS Ex- Students' Union Committee & Patron. October 2021

Internet references

Barbara Elizabeth Sargeant (née **Evans**; 1940 – 23 June 2021)^[1] was an Australian [swimmer](#).^[2] She competed in the [women's 200 yards breaststroke](#) at the [1956 Summer Olympics](#).^[3]

Two years after [1956 Olympic Games](#), she won the silver medal in the 4 × 100 m medley relay and finished fifth in the 200 Yards breaststroke final at the [1958 British Empire and Commonwealth Games](#) in [Cardiff, Wales](#).^[4] She married Graham Sargeant, who also had a swimming background and won an Australian junior surf belt championship. She had two children - former Hockeyroo Megan Oman (née Sargeant) and son Andrew.^[4]

NGHS 1956 Evans, Brown, McRae



Three students: (l to r) Barbara Evans, Doreen Brown, Sandra McRae