

## Past WAW Committee Members

### Audrey Jones -1929-2014 – an Inspiring Campaigner for Women's Rights



Audrey Jones was a founder member of Wales Assembly of Women (WAW). An energetic campaigner for women's rights, she travelled the world to take part in key United Nations conferences and was central to women's rights campaigns in Wales.

Audrey represented Wales on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and WAW became accredited to the UN Economic and Social Council in 2000, when Audrey hand-delivered the application in New York.

She took part in the significant 1995 United Nations World Conference for Women in Beijing, attending preparatory meetings in European cities and drafting reports. Beijing proved a watershed in mainstreaming gender equality, establishing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the key global policy document on gender equality.

Audrey regularly represented WAW at the annual New York sessions to review progress on Beijing until a couple of years before her death, and took part in the major conferences Beijing+5 (2000) and Beijing+10 (2005).

Aged 84, she was attending a London meeting to prepare for an international conference of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) when she taken ill. She died later a few months later.

Audrey was one of the 60 leading feminists interviewed for the British Library archive Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project, that documented memories of activists at the forefront of the fight for political and social equality in the 1970s/80s.

The British Library website holds a summary of her six-hour-plus interview and has a video clip of Audrey commenting, in typically animated fashion, on the sexism evident in exam questions of the time – link: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/audrey-jones-sexist-exam-questions#>



Audrey was a driving force in the Women's Forum of the Vale of Glamorgan Labour Party. Determined the Forum should survive when all-women meetings were being questioned in Labour Party circles, she argued women needed as many platforms as possible to promote equality.

As devolution loomed in Wales, she was an ardent campaigner as women's groups came together in a powerful movement to persuade the new National Assembly to commit to equal opportunity. She took to the streets with other WAW members in the drive to get Labour to adopt constituency twinning to ensure gender quality in Labour representation in the first Assembly.

Audrey first made her mark as an inspirational teacher. For 30 years she taught at St Cyres Comprehensive School, Penarth, gaining a reputation as an uncompromising advocate of girls' education and rising to Deputy Head, a distinction gained by few women in 1980s comprehensives.

Committed to challenging sexism in education, she encouraged girls to study science and maths. When she died, tributes included one from former student Paralympic athlete Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, who said she was 'an amazing teacher' and a 'massive influence' on her life.

Audrey had wide interests. She was a founder member of Women's Archive of Wales, the body committed to raising the profile of women in Welsh history. She linked WAW with the Women's Arts Association, and, deeply interested in art though not an artist, herself, became Chair for several years.



In 2016, WAW set up the Audrey Jones Awards for Research by Women in her honour. Audrey was always keen to involve young women in the movement and always, herself, felt it was important to keep up with the latest research on women's right. The Awards brought these two aims together.

In 2017, the life and times of Audrey Jones, campaigner for women's rights and inspirational teacher, was included in the Dictionary of Welsh Biography, the prestigious national database that contains more than 5,000 concise biographies of Welsh people who have made a significant contribution to national life, whether in Wales or more widely.



The entry on Audrey for the Dictionary of Welsh Biography was written by Dr Jean Silvan Evans, a member of WAW, who said: 'Audrey spent time and energy fighting for the rights of women in Wales and across the world. It was a privilege to record her life and work for this important national database, where it will continue to inspire other women.'

Audrey came to live in Wales in the 1950s when her late husband Hugh Jones took over transport logistics for international chemical company Dow Corning and the family settled in Dinas Powys. She was buried in Cardiff Natural Burial Ground in St Nicholas after a humanist funeral service. She was survived by her only son Robert Jones.

Jane Hutt AM (SM) called Audrey a Warrior and she writes,

*"Audrey Jones was not only a dedicated and inspirational teacher, she was a courageous and committed feminist who helped form the Wales Women's Rights Committee, Wales Assembly of Women and was a long-term contributor to UN consultations and debates upholding Women's Rights across the world, attending the UN as a delegate for Wales in the past 5 years supported by the Welsh Government."*

Further links:

Penarth Times obituary

<https://www.penarthtimes.co.uk/news/11422630.tributes-pour-in-to-teacher-that-encouraged-pupils-to-break-the-mould/>

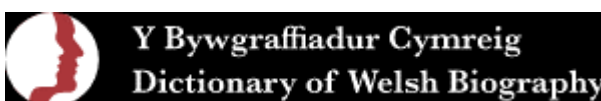
Penarth Times article

<https://www.penarthtimes.co.uk/news/15117764.long-serving-teacher-and-womens-rights-campaigner-included-in-database-for-her-contribution-to-national-life/>

Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Audrey\\_Evelyn\\_Jones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Audrey_Evelyn_Jones)

Dictionary of Welsh Biography



<https://biography.wales/article/s11-JONE-EVE-1929>





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[https://www.100welshwomen.wales/100-women/audrey\\_jones/](https://www.100welshwomen.wales/100-women/audrey_jones/)