

The Dr Thelma Bessell-Browne Scholarship

The Dr Thelma Bessell-Brown Scholarship was established in honour of Dr Leo Leriche's late wife Dr Thelma Bessell-Browne. Thelma was a teacher who dedicated her whole life to education, with a strong focus on reading and literacy in particular. The Dr Thelma Bessell-Browne Scholarship will be awarded to a student studying 4th Year in an Undergraduate Education degree who demonstrates a passion for education and a specific interest in reading and literacy.

About Dr Thelma Bessell-Browne

Dr Leo Leriche has enabled ECU to set up a scholarship in honour of his inspirational wife.

Dr Leriche wanted to honour his wife's memory in a lasting way.

Dr Bessell-Browne dedicated her whole life to education, with a strong focus on reading and literacy in particular.

Due to her passion and devotion towards education Dr Leriche felt that it would be appropriate to have a scholarship bearing her name in the area of Early Childhood Education.



After graduating dux of her class at Claremont teachers College in 1959, she worked for several years as a teacher before moving into support roles.

In 1975, Thelma joined Churchlands Teachers College as a junior primary lecturer. During this time she completed her Bachelor degree and Masters in anthropology at the University of Western Australia. She then took study leave to complete her Masters and PhD in Education at the University of Oregon, in the United States.

Sadly Thelma was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis while overseas.

However she returned to work at Claremont Teachers College for a year before ill health forced her into early retirement at the age of 46.

She died on 4th July 2003.

Originally from the United States, Leo met Thelma while teaching at Churchlands and the pair spent 25 happy years together.

Dr Leriche has kindly provided ECU with Dr Bessell-Browne's thesis (displayed at the Visitors Centre on the Joondalup campus). This thesis is also available to ECU students studying Primary Education and will be of tremendous benefit due to the wealth of information that it offers.

A commemorative tile has also been laid in her name on ECU's Path of Honour.