

Posthumous Presentation of an Institute Finlaison Medal to Mrs Doreen Hart

[The Institute of Actuaries, 30 July 2010]

The President (Mr N. B. Masters, F.I.A.): If I may, I should like to move on to the presentation of the Finlaison Medal. This is perhaps the most poignant part of the proceedings.

Doreen Hart was proposed for a Finlaison Medal – one of the profession's two top medals – last autumn for her exceptional contribution to the work of the Actuarial Profession and, particularly, for her work as the Editor of the *British Actuarial Journal*. So it is particularly sad that Doreen, who passed away suddenly at the end of last year before the process of confirming the award was completed, was never able to learn how much her colleagues valued and respected her work for the Profession.

I am very grateful indeed to Helen and Ian for coming here today to receive the Medal on her behalf. I am sure that they are rightly proud of the esteem with which Doreen was held.

The Finlaison Medal itself was introduced in its first form as our Silver Medal in 1963 and then became known as the Finlaison Medal in the 1980s. There are in fact another 20 people – only 20 in all those years – who have received this Medal. So Doreen will be the 21st.

Doreen's life and achievements, which include her service to the Church and her devotion to her family, are well described in an article in the March 2010 issue of *The Actuary* magazine. Richard Muckart is here, and thank you, Richard, for that fine article.

For those who perhaps did not see that article, let me just pick up a few key dates from her career as an actuary.

Doreen qualified as a Fellow in 1967. She was actually the first married woman to qualify at that level. It is quite amazing, really, such a sign of the times. In 1975 she was asked to be an Assistant Editor of the *Journal* and became Editor in 1988.

As Editor she saw through the transition of the *Journal of the Institute of Actuaries* (as it was then) into the *British Actuarial Journal*. That was in 1995. So she merged the *Journal* of the Institute and *Transactions* of the Faculty. She achieved her merger clearly well before the rest of us achieved ours!

She held the post of Editor from that time all the way through to her death at the end of last year. That is a terrific accomplishment.

Doreen was an excellent planner and organiser; but it was her eye for detail and the resulting quality of the *BAJ* that is her great legacy to the Actuarial Profession.

So, may I ask Helen, her daughter, to step forward and accept the Finlaison award on behalf of Doreen. Better, if you will stay where you are, I will come to you.

Mrs Helen Eskriett: I've no idea what Mum would have said today, but I suspect she would have been somewhat surprised to find herself added to the group of notable individuals who have previously received this prestigious award.

In 1967 Mum was the first married woman to qualify, but soon after gave up going out to work as she was pregnant with me. All through my and my brother's childhood, school days, teen years and after we left home, Mum combined her commitments to family, Church, Girl Guiding, the community and to the Institute. She loved her work, her enthusiasm for it never waned and she was in no hurry to give it up. I'm sure that Mum didn't see what she did as in any way remarkable, she was just doing her job to the best of her ability in her quiet, unassuming way.

Perhaps, today, on receiving this award Mum may just have said 'Thank you'.