

Lorna Davies (1911–2001)

Lorna Louise Davies died peacefully on June 29 at the age of 90.

She attended school at Collegiate and Girls' High and then trained as a general nurse and mid-wife at Grey's Hospital. She won the provincial gold medal for first place in her final examination and the Kenneth Gloag medal for first place in the 1933 final exams of South Africa (under the regulations of the SA Medical Council). She finally attended the University of the Witwatersrand and acquired a Diploma in Nursing Education and was appointed sister tutor at Grey's.

Her potential for nursing administration and nursing education was recognised in 1951 when she was appointed the first chief nursing officer for Natal – a post which she held for 19 years until 1970. This position made her responsible for all nursing services and nursing education in all hospitals and clinics in Natal (over 50 in number), apart from psychiatric and public health institutions which were not under the control of provincial authorities.

Davies immediately began the huge task of becoming familiar with each institution until in the end she was fully aware of the problems and needs of each. This enabled her to plan and implement programmes to enhance the standards of nursing services and nursing education.

She promoted the creation of a nursing inspectorate at head office. Through the appointment of highly qualified and experienced nurses to inspector posts in the fields of nursing service, nursing education and operating theatre technique, high standards of professional nursing practice were attained.

She herself visited each hospital and clinic regularly. This entailed travelling across the length and breadth of Natal, often on poor roads in very isolated areas.



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Davies was renowned for her work in nursing education in Natal, which evolved from the early courses for auxiliary nurses, general nurses and midwives to more highly organised courses in nursing colleges in big hospitals and finally to the academic courses in collaboration with the University of Natal – the Diploma in Nursing Education and the degree course for nurses.

She was a gentle woman with a strong personality, great intellectual ability and a warmth for her fellow man. She was a pleasure to work under and with. She left to her successors a province with an efficient and competent nursing service and a varied nursing education system.

She was a member of the board of the South African Nursing Association and the South African Nursing Council. To both these statutory bodies she brought her vast experience of nursing requirements and a sound grasp of the basic health needs of all Natal's varied communities, both rural and urban. Her debating skills made many a meeting a valuable learning experience. In appreciation of the contribution Lorna Davies had made to nursing education in South Africa, her profession awarded her their prestigious B.G. Alexander medal. She was also awarded honorary life membership of the SA Nursing Association. Another award in 1953 was the Coronation medal.

We valued her as a real friend and respected her for the wisdom and understanding she had for the many difficulties our profession often experienced.

BARBARA DEEKSand PADDY HARRISON
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