

Vale Colleen Hood

March 01, 2018

At Federation's February Council meeting, General Secretary John Dixon remembered Colleen Hood as a tireless and courageous advocate in the struggle for justice and fairness. A long-time teacher, Federation Life Member and labour movement activist, she died after a short illness on 8 January, aged 75.

Colleen was born in Coffs Harbour when her father, Ray Mullins, was teacher-in-charge at Ulong Public School, in the hinterland. She was first schooled at Bunnan Public School in the Upper Hunter, where she was taught by her father, while secondary schooling was at the hands of the sisters at St Catherine's College, Singleton.

On leaving school, Colleen spent some time at the Government Insurance Office before entering Alexander Mackie Teachers College in 1961. Her association with the union started when she joined the Trainee Teachers Association and campaigned for increased allowances for country students who were paying very high rents in the city.

In 1962, Colleen received an appointment at Ashcroft Public School, in western Sydney, and worked at several city schools while she was busy raising her three young children. Colleen and her young family moved to Tamworth in 1971 where she immediately immersed herself in Federation activities, especially in the fight to reduce class sizes. She was elected Fed Rep at Tamworth Primary School and shortly afterwards elected to Council.

Colleen moved to the Central Coast in 1981 as a resource teacher at Killarney Vale Primary, became active in Wyong TA and was soon elected as Association Secretary. In 1985, she transferred to the Gosford Association and was very active as a Councillor and delegate to Annual Conference, and acted as Assistant Timekeeper at Council and Annual Conference for many years. She has also been active in other facets of her local community. She was President of the Tamworth Musical Association and encouraged her students to be active in the cultural life of the community. On the Central Coast, she was part in the wider labour movement and represented Gosford Association at the local Trades and Labour Council.

Colleen was a life member of the Gosford Association and awarded Life Membership of Federation in 1994.

Mr Dixon said that what most impressed Colleen's colleagues over the years was her promotion of Federation's policies and values at the school level. "The honour conferred on her at Annual Conference of life membership acknowledged her long involvement with Federation and the high value we place on her idealism and tenacity," Mr Dixon said.

