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**Marjorie Dwyer (Vic) \***  
**Softball Australia umpire # AA 6**  
**ISF certification number # 94**

Marjorie (Marj) Dwyer devoted most of her life and loyal service to the game of softball. After the Second World War, she maintained an interest in the Air Training Corps for which she formed a softball team, the Wingers, which playing in the Melbourne competition.



In 1962, Marj was instrumental, along with Esther Deason and Merle (Shorty) Short in securing the first Women's World Championship for Australia in 1965. In the lead up to the series she worked full-time on sponsorship and fundraising. She was able to do this because she had received a modest inheritance upon the death of her mother in 1940. In 1966 Marj, Esther and Shorty were awarded Life Membership of the Australian Softball Federation.

In 1957 she took on the Presidency of the Victorian Umpires' Association. Softball became her life and she worked voluntarily to promote the game teaching young children and university students. In 1968 she was elected Umpire-in-Chief for Australia.

At national championships she was always very prominent in the area behind the fence line, reserved for the Tournament Chief Umpire. Her role was to examine umpires and hear any protests. This meant she was at the ground from the first pitch until the last pitch of the day.

Marj was a very dominant and forthright person who held fast to her interpretation of the Rule Book. Over a period of time, it appeared that the game took place because of the umpires, rather than the umpires facilitating the game. Marj was interpreting the rule much more rigidly than they were overseas. The National Coaching Director of the day, Jim Gibson, recognised that this was disadvantaging our national teams.

Things came to a head in February 1985 when the New Zealand Men's team walked off the diamond because of the calling of illegal pitches. With the first South Pacific Classic for women scheduled for March that year, Board of Management acted quickly to spill the positions of the Australia Softball Umpire's Association. The decision was made not to reappoint Marj as the Umpire-in-Chief after more than 30 years of service.

With the South Pacific Classic imminent, the Board had to quickly to find replacements. Lyn Bishop (Vic) was approached to the Tournament Chief Umpire and Margo Koskelainen (Vic) was appointed as the Acting Umpire-in-Chief.

Margo went on to become the new Australian Softball Federation Umpire-in-Chief, a position which she held for over 20 years.

\*deceased

#### **AWARDS**

1966      Softball Australia Life Member  
1987      Softball Australian Hall of Fame