

ES Marks and his Contribution to Australian Sport

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Abstract

This thesis presents a chronological study of the life of Ernest Samuel Marks, a proudly Jewish man who was universally known as a champion of amateur sport in Australia, a highly efficient administrator in many sports and a long-serving alderman, and sometime Lord Mayor, in the City of Sydney, who, over half a century since his death, has been largely forgotten.

Ernest Marks was a man who found the time and energy to devote to his love of sport, to public service, to patriotic work and to charities, to history, to communications, to business and to his faith. He was a man who for sixty years was an exemplar for volunteerism through his multifarious unpaid activities within and without the world of sport.

His realms of influence included:

- Amateur sporting clubs and associations in Sydney, New South Wales and Australia
- Australian Olympic and Empire Games Movements, including the chairing of the organising committee of the 1938 Empire Games in Sydney, the first pageant of international sport to be hosted in this nation
- International sport, through his links with a number of bodies including the International Olympic Committee
- Municipal Council of Sydney where, for a quarter of a century, he was a highly respected alderman with a particular interest in the provision of playing facilities for children, especially the underprivileged
- Patriotic activities during both World Wars
- Manifold charities
- Philanthropy
- His Jewish community.

As an administrator, Ernest Marks contributed to the modernisation of sport in Australia from predominantly locally-based games to that where activities and competitions were well organised and this nation had become a significant player on the international sporting stage.

This thesis celebrates his story and, in the words of John Ritchie, a former General Editor of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, ‘rescue [s] and restore[s] a comparatively unknown person to his ... rightful place’.¹

I believe that by sharing the story of the life and times of Ernest Samuel Marks which hitherto had been forgotten, under-estimated, misrepresented, confused or ignored, this thesis has added to the body of knowledge of those who have contributed to Australian sport. In the process, I believe that I have also been able to underscore his profound sense of civic responsibility.

¹ J Ritchie, ‘Getting a life: the General Editor of the Australian Dictionary of Biography, John Ritchie, provides a practical guide to the “impossible” craft of biography.’ *Meanjin*, vol. 61, no. 1, March 2002, pp. 94-97.

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Abbreviations Used

AAA	Amateur Athletic Association
AABWU	Australasian Amateur Boxing and Wrestling Union
AAUA	Amateur Athletic Union of Australasia/Australia
AAUANZ	Amateur Athletic Union of Australia and New Zealand
ABEGA	Australian British Empire Games Association
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
AJHS	Australian Jewish Historical Society
AOF	Australian Olympic Federation
ASCV	Amateur Sports Club of Victoria
ASF	Amateur Sporting Federation of New South Wales
BEGF	British Empire Games Federation
BSST	Board of Social Study and Training
CBE	Commander of the Order of the British Empire
CUB	Carlton and United Breweries
DLC	Darlinghurst Liberal Club
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
ESAAC	Eastern Suburbs Amateur Athletic Club
ESASC	Eastern Suburbs Amateur Swimming Club
ESDFC	Eastern Suburbs District Football Club
ESM	Ernest Samuel Marks
ESMSC	ES Marks Sporting Collection
FINA	Fédération Internationale de Natation Amateur
HVM	Hilda Violette Marks
IAAF	International Amateur Athletic Federation
IOC	International Olympic Committee
HLDA	Hebrew Literary and Debating Association
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire
MCS	Municipal Council of Sydney
MRU	Metropolitan Rugby Union
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
NOC	National Olympic Committee
NRAA	National Recreation Association of America
NSW	New South Wales
NSWAAA	NSW Amateur Athletic Association
NSWABWU	NSW Amateur Boxing and Wrestling Union
NSWASA	NSW Amateur Swimming Association
NSWCA	NSW Cricket Association
NSWNCA	NSW National Coursing Association
NSWOC	NSW Olympic Council
NSWRU	NSW Rugby Union
NZ	New Zealand
NZAAA	New Zealand Amateur Athletic Association
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire
PJM	Percy Joseph Marks

Abbreviations Used

QAAA	Queensland Amateur Athletic Association
RCAAC	Royston College Amateur Athletic Club
RFU	Rugby Football Union
Sports Club	NSW Sports Club
SDFC	Sydney District Football Club
SMH	<i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i>
SRFU	Southern Rugby Football Union
TCJ	<i>Australian Town and Country Journal</i>
UAP	United Australia Party
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UOA	Union of Old Athletes
USA	United States of America
VAAA	Victorian Amateur Athletic Association

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