



Ella Athorn
1908 - 2006

Ella was born in Richmond in 1908, one of a family of eight children. She was educated at Elsternwick Primary School, and won a scholarship to University High School. From there, Ella became a junior teacher, 'almost by mistake'. She was, however, admirably suited to the profession and taught in a number of rural schools before meeting Arch Athorn, while teaching at Swan Hill.

Arch and Ella came to Dandenong with their son, Jim, in 1952. Teaching young children was one of the loves of Ella's life and she joined the staff at Dandenong Primary School. She moved to Yarraman Primary when it opened and then to Dandenong North, where she taught for seventeen years until she retired in 1978. Known affectionately as 'Mrs A', Ella influenced the lives of countless children, from whom she earned the reputation for being strict but fair.

Ella's dedicated record as a teacher is paralleled by her active and continuous commitment to the development and promotion of netball as a sport. This dates from 1939 when Ella helped to form the Timboon & District Women's Basketball Umpires Association was formed in 1954, and she has had a particularly strong influence on setting and maintaining umpiring standards.

Ella's role as a coach, umpire and member of numerous local committees, was recognised in 1983 when the netball pavilion in Greaves Reserve was named in her honour. Her enormous contribution to the greater good of the sport over a period of sixty years has recently been marked by the presentation of Netball Victoria's Distinction Award, and her induction as the eighth member of the newly-created Netball Hall of Fame.