

TRACEY LORD

MILLINERY c1953-1991.....

The milliner behind the Tracey Lord label is Irmgard Lyons (née Bunk) born in Weiden, Germany in 1931. She immigrated to Australia in 1954 and came straight to Canberra. Irmgard was a trained milliner and found a position assisting Kevin Lyons who had recently opened a hat shop, Tracey Lord, on Lonsdale Street, Braddon. A romance blossomed and Irmgard and Kevin Lyons were married at St Christopher's Cathedral in Manuka in March 1957.

Tracey Lord met the millinery needs of Canberra's growing community and the highly anticipated royal tour of 1954. Irmgard recalls making hats in 1958 for Lady Slim, wife of the Governor General Sir William Slim, and the wives of a succession of Prime Ministers, diplomats and government officials. The shop moved into the new Monaro Mall in 1963 and Irmgard's hats became de-rigueur for Canberra's society ladies throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Tracey Lord closed during renovations to the Monaro Mall in 1991.

'S O TAYLOR, MERCER AND DRAPER'.....

Stan Taylor was born in 1891 at Tanja on the south coast of NSW. He was the last of sixteen children born to Thomas and Louisa Taylor, three of whom died in infancy. Stan attended Tanja School from age five to ten then left to work on his parents' dairy farm. He had one more year of school at fourteen before returning to work on the farm.

In 1913 Stan met his future wife Agnes White and they were married the following year at the Enmore Tabernacle. In 1917 Stan was lured to Queanbeyan where he'd heard big money could be made selling ladies woollen jackets. After running a retail shopfront, Stan found work on the railways before going into business selling clothing from a horse and cart. Most of Stan's business was conducted in Canberra and on 1st January 1926 Stan and Agnes rented a small residence/shop in Giles Street Kingston for £5 per week. The business survived until the early 1930s when economic hardships led to its closure.

After a varied working life in both the private and public sectors, Stan took up his last position in the menswear department of Charles Rogers Civic store in 1959. He retired in 1966 aged seventy seven.

MAGGIE SHEPHERD DESIGN.....

Maggie Shepherd received her early education in sewing from her mother, well-known Canberra dressmaker Effie (Euphemia) Makin, who worked from the 1930s until she married in 1940. Maggie started designing and selling her own creations at local markets in the 1970s. Her designs proved to be very popular and in 1981 she opened the first 'Shepherds' store in Centrepont Arcade, Petrie Plaza.

Her boldly colourful clothing range expanded and she established Maggie Shepherd shops during the 1980s and 90s. At its height there were eight stores in Australia and eleven in the United States. During her time as a fashion designer, Maggie Shepherd was regarded as one of Australia's most successful fashion exporters. She was awarded the Small Business Award and a Bicentennial Achievement Award in 1988, and in 1991 she was appointed the General Division of the Order of Australia for services to clothing design and exportation. Her business in Canberra closed in 2005.

SYLVIA PARSONS

CANBERRA FASHION SALON.....

Sylvia May Johnson (1911-2000) was born on a property near Gunning and came to Canberra in 1941 after her marriage to John Parsons. Sylvia taught home economics at Kingston Technical College. The course included dressmaking and design. In 1948 she saw a business opportunity for a 'fashion house' in Kingston. Eventually Sylvia Parsons traded in four locations: Kingston (1948-1996); Manuka (1950-55); Civic (1955-63) and Woden (1972-90).

Sylvia Parsons and her shops played a significant role in Canberra's retail history, maintaining a regular clientele for forty-eight years. The shop featured prominently in many women's lives with particular emphasis on continued service and quality of staff. Sylvia's business sense and involvement in charitable organisations, through groups such as the Soroptimists Club, made her a Canberra identity.

GANTER'S FABRIC SALON.....

Harold (1905-1972) and Elsie Ganter (nee Claridge 1909-2007), moved from Rockhampton to Canberra in 1941 when Harold became the Manager of JB Young's Kingston store. Harold's business acumen and sociability was at the fore when after WW2 he employed an interpreter to help serve post war migrants, some of whom staffed the store's delicatessen as they were familiar with European fare.

Elsie had been a buyer for Kirby's fabric store in Rockhampton and in 1958 she and Harold opened their own 'fabric salon' in Kennedy Street Kingston. The following year they moved two doors up and remained in business there for the next fifty two years. Their business prospered and sons Harold Jnr and David entered the family company and opened stores in the newly opened Monaro Mall (1963) and Woden Plaza (1972).

Ganter's was synonymous with quality fabric, personal service and expert advice. This long-running Canberra business closed its doors in June 2011, still ringing up sales on the 1958 cash register and wrapping purchases in paper tied with string.