

# Legend teacher, lace artist fondly remembered



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**The Canberra Times**

**Updated 12** December 2023 - 6:36pm, first published 6:33pm

<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/8457099/remembering-petronella-wensing-oam-talented-teacher-lacemaker/>

She taught children, questioned politicians and travelled the world thanks to her talent for legendary lacemaking. She was, of course, the memorable [Petronella Jacoba Wensing OAM](#).

Mrs Wensing was a teacher at Griffith's [St Clare's College](#) in the '70s and '80s. During those early years of the school she taught girls how to sew, embroider and make lace.



Tributes have poured in for former teacher at St Clare's College, and master lace maker, Petronella Wensing OAM who died this month. Picture by Graham Tidy

Her former students - now in Perth, Brisbane, and everywhere in between - remember her warmth and patience during their school days.

From helping them excel in class to passing her passion for textiles on to them, tributes have poured in attesting to the affect she had on these women.

At least a hundred of Mrs Wensing's former students posted their condolences on Facebook and thanked the beloved teacher for leaving a mark on their life.

They called her a "legend".

## **A long and fulfilling life**

Mrs Wensing was born in 1924 in southern Holland where she found her love for [Belgian](#) lacemaking.

When she immigrated to Australia as a young mother she spoke three languages - Dutch, German, French. Her son Dr Ed Wensing said she learnt how to read English by subscribing to this masthead.



Lace maker and collector Petronella Wensing pictured here with a 1990's Moscow art school headdress, one of her many extraordinary works that were displayed at Canberra Museum & Gallery. Picture by Andrew Campbell

While being invited to every [royal Dutch visit in Australia](#), producing large-scale lace artworks for multiple countries, and enriching the lives of children, Mrs Wensing also found time to improve her local community.

"She was a formidable woman, she was just an achiever in life," Dr Wensing said. "She never resiled from confronting politicians, regardless of their political colour ... and quite often got her way."

The pensioner would take a bus and wait outside MPs' offices to speak with them about issues in education, public transport, and the rights of women, immigrants and refugees.



The late Mrs Wensing chatting to former leader of the opposition in the ACT Zed Seselja about improvements in public transport. Picture by Andrew Campbell

Growing up during the Depression and living through World War II had solidified her motivation and morals.

"She grew up when poverty was rife and resources were scarce ... she was a tough lady," her son said.

"She's taught me to question authority. She knew this world was unjust and she knew you had to fight."

## **Remembering Petronella Wensing OAM**

The 99-year-old died peacefully of old age on December 7. She did not have any chronic illnesses.

"She wanted to make a 100," Dr Wensing said.

Mrs Wensing's family has welcomed everyone who knew her, especially while she was a teacher, to the funeral on Thursday at midday in St. Brigid's Catholic Church.

There's also a livestream link for those who cannot attend - [atnd.com.au/petronella-wensing](https://atnd.com.au/petronella-wensing). A wake will follow at the Ainslie Football Club from 2pm.

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