

Multi-layered lady about town set down sights and scenes for posterity

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MARIAN TREAR de LACY LOWE

MODEL, AUTHOR

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By **DOMINIC LOWE**

DE LACY Lowe, whose adventurous life embraced careers as a craftswoman, fashion model, author and public speaker, has died of heart failure in the East Melbourne house in which she was born. She was 94.

To be different, de Lacy contracted her name when she took up modelling and success came quickly on the catwalk, on television and in stills. Her ability earned her the nickname "One-take de Lacy" with leading photographers, and her career peaked in the mid-1960s when she featured in an entire knitting book for Paton's titled *Who is Mrs de Lacy Lowe?*. The book was photographed in the studio of Henry Talbot and Helmut Newton.

She was also a regular house model on Graeme Kennedy's *In Melbourne Tonight*, while her television advertisement for Lipton's tea ("It cuts the Golden Rule by half") ran for several years.

The only child of two pharmacists, Arthur and Kathleen de Lacy, she attended Genazzano and Loreto convents, and later Merton Hall.

Her wish to be an actress was quashed by her horrified parents, but her winning smile, natural grace, strength of will and amazing stamina enabled her to acquit herself in a wide range of skills.

The house in which she was born belonged to her adoring and patrician grandparents, Emily and James de Lacy, and she would buy it back in 1966 long after it had been sold. The house retained much of the original furniture that had been bought at the Great Exhibition in 1888; the drawing room even retained the inset oil panels of birds painted by her grandmother.

After leaving school de Lacy became highly skilled in both weaving and ceramics, and during World War II she managed, alone, shipping cargoes in Melbourne for the Department of Supply. Later, with the Red Cross, she taught handcrafts to recovering servicemen at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital. After the war, de Lacy and two Melbourne girlfriends hitchhiked across war-ravaged Europe before she found work as a children's teacher of English in Sicily even though she could not speak Italian.

Her charges were children of the titled La Motta family who lived in a feudal mix of austerity and large estates. Her enthusiasm for horse riding created a mild panic in the household who feared kidnappers, but the closest she came to mishap was when the diplomatic Austin in which she was a passenger plunged into a ravine.

Dazed but uninjured, she watched with amusement as the English consul clambered out to wrestle the Union Jack from atop the car's radiator.

When she returned home to Melbourne she married Stanley Lowe, a teacher she first met at a pre-war school dance. He died of his injuries in a car accident in 1971.

Possessed of a clear speaking voice, in latter life de Lacy was a volunteer newsreader for 3RPH, the print handicapped broadcaster.

A proud and inquisitive Melburnian, de Lacy was also the author of *Walking around Melbourne* and the best-selling *See Melbourne by Tram*.

She is survived by her son, Dominic Lowe.

This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/obituaries/multilayered-lady-about-town-set-down-sights-and-scenes-for-posterity-20101109-17m5a.html>