

Community history, Chinese

Alma Fang Yuen (1910- c. 2000)

Alma Fang Yuen: My mother was known as the Granny of Chinatown, and because she was the mother of seven sons and six daughters, she was asked by many Chinese brides to attend the birth of their children...We lived in Sachs St in Chinatown, and I suppose the best-known family that she helped was the Tung Yep's, the youngest of whom is Bishop George Tung Yep. I still have correspondence with Ms Ruby Tung Yep, a friend and now resident of Blackman's Bay, Tasmania. She is a very talented and popular person who still comes to Cairns to visit her family and hosts of friends.

Diana Giese: She did very well for herself in life.

Alma Fang Yuen: I'll say!...I don't think that there was anybody around like her at her age. She was a beautiful girl, really beautiful...She left Cairns to travel...but then she found herself in Canada and she thought she would go to the United States and she got a position in the Chinese Embassy. And of course she never looked back. [She went on to work for the World Bank.]...She gets a pension which keeps her in fine style...She's got three fur coats. She's got them in the refrigerator to keep them from melting, right?

Mrs Fang Yuen was the sixth daughter of Lee Wah Shang, and brother of Caleb Shang, the most decorated Australian soldier of Chinese ancestry of World War I. His medals are now displayed at the Cairns RSL

(From interview with Diana Giese, TRC 3449, 1996; see also interviews with Bishop George Tung Yep, TRC 3062, 1995, and his wife Marion Tung Yep, ORAL TRC 3446, 1996, all in *Post-War Chinese Australians*, National Library of Australia)

Link

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