

PRICE, DILYS MARGARET (1932 - 2020), educationalist and skydiver

Name: Dilys Margaret Price
Date of birth: 1932
Date of death: 2020
Spouse: Thomas Roland Price
Child: Rhys Daniel Price
Parent: Thomas John Evans
Parent: Elizabeth M. Evans (née Gould)
Gender: Female
Occupation: educationalist and skydiver
Area of activity: Education; Sports and Leisure Pursuits; Philanthropy
Author: Bet Davies

Dilys Price was born in Bournemouth on 3 June 1932, the only child of Thomas John Evans (1899-1973), born in Treherbert, and Elizabeth M Evans (née Gould, 1906-1963), from Aberaman, near Aberdare. Her father served in the Royal Air Force during the Great War, before going into service in Bournemouth following a religious conversion by missionaries. There, in 1929, he married Elizabeth Gould. Soon after Dilys's birth they returned to Aberdare. In 1934, influenced by intercessor [Rees Howells](#), the family moved to the Bible College in Swansea where her father took on the role of gardener at the Italianate gardens on the Derwen Fawr estate, following in the footsteps of his own father, a gardener at Powis Castle.

Dilys Price was educated at the boarding school at Derwen Fawr established by Rees Howells for children of missionaries, amongst pupils from Asia and other far flung countries, including Jewish refugees during the Second World War. She completed her education at a local high school, before attending Swansea College in 1950 to train as a teacher. From 1952 to 1955 her first teaching post was at Townhill School, Swansea, and during her tenure there her pupils won many awards in gymnastics and dance at the annual Urdd National Eisteddfod.

In 1955 she was encouraged to study dance for two years under the direction of Rudolf Laban, who established his studio, The Art of Movement, that year in Addlestone, Surrey. The experience of learning with Laban, the pioneer who is considered the father of contemporary dance, had a huge impact on the young Welsh woman, and was an inspirational influence on her work and her attitude to life and to people throughout her life. Laban went on to review dance education, emphasising his belief that dance should be available to all. This was the stimulus for Dilys to specialise in introducing dance for all, and especially for people with physical disabilities.

On completion of her education with Laban in 1957 she was appointed as a teacher at Coed y Mwstwr School, an approved school for girls in Bridgend, managed by the Home Office. The following year, in 1958, she joined the first purpose-built comprehensive school in Wales, Sandfields School in Port Talbot. Being a brand new school its facilities for physical education were excellent and she introduced courses in dance and movement throughout the school, for young people of all abilities, with a designated studio for that purpose. Her work was ground-breaking at the time, and, as a result, she came to the attention of the Cardiff Teacher Training College, where she was offered the position of Senior Lecturer in Physical Education and Movement in 1960. That same year (1960) she married Thomas Roland Price (1925-1990) and they had one son, Rhys Daniel Price (b. 1967), before the marriage was dissolved in 1975.

She taught and undertook research at Cardiff Teacher Training College until her retirement in 1990. She received the degree of B.Ed in Creative Arts in 1965 and M.Ed in 1979, when the college was upgraded to The South Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education. There she established a specialist module in movement for children and adults with physical disabilities, the first of its kind in the United Kingdom. Dilys played a key role in the development of the Centre for Disability Sport at South Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education, now Cardiff Metropolitan University. Again this centre was the first of its kind in the United Kingdom, and was influential in the development of the Paralympic Movement.

In 1998, Dilys Price established the pioneering Touch Trust charity, which offers a unique programme in creative movement to individuals with profound disabilities. The charity became one of the seven resident creative companies within Wales Millennium Centre in 2004. Dilys Price served as Chief Executive of the charity until 2015. Her programme is now offered at many special schools across Wales.

In 2003 Dilys Price was awarded the OBE in recognition of her contribution to education and to people with disabilities in Wales. She was made an Honorary Fellow of Cardiff Metropolitan University in 2011, of the University of Wales Trinity St David in 2018 and of Cardiff University in 2019.

In 1986 she attempted skydiving for the very first time, and henceforth it became her life's obsession as well as a means to fundraise for her charity. She completed over 1,300 solo jumps, as well as many tandem jumps, and she specialised in aerial acrobatics. On 13 April 2013, at the age of 80 and 315 days, at Langar airfield, Nottingham, she broke the world record as the oldest woman skydiver, and that record stood until her death in 2020. In 2017 she gave a TEDx talk in Cardiff on skydiving, entitled 'It's never too late'.

Dilys Price died on 9 October 2020 at her home in Cardiff.

Author

Bet Davies

Sources

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Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance: [Rudolf Laban](#)

Rudolf Laban, Lisa Ullmann, *The mastery of movement* (Dance Books Ltd 1988)

The London Gazette, Supplement 31 December 2002

TEDx Talk: [It's never too late](#)

Personal acquaintance

family information from Ann Parry

Further reading

Wikipedia Article: [Dilys Price](#)

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