

BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS
NOMINATION OF MARGARET HUMPHREYS FOR THE
IFSW ANDREW MOURAVIEFF-APOSTOL MEDAL

RECOMMENDATION

BASW is pleased to nominate Margaret Humphreys, Director of the Child Migrant Trust, for the IFSW Andrew Mouravieff-Apostol Medal. This nomination is supported by the Australian and Canadian associations.

'For decades, child migrants were lost and forgotten by our countries - both old and new. We didn't belong anywhere, we had no words to explain what had happened to us, or who we were. We were truly lost in the wilderness.

Margaret found our families and brought us home, one by one. She stayed beside us and gave us a voice to help governments listen, and finally to understand.

National Apologies in the UK and Australia are testament to her work, and to our refusal to give in or be silenced.'

John Hennessey OAM (former child migrant, 2015)

MARGARET HUMPHREYS

Margaret Humphreys CBE, AO is a UK social worker who founded a multi-national social work agency. I worked with her in Nottingham (UK) soon after we both qualified in the 1970s. Always looking out for creative solutions, she set up an innovative post-adoption service 'Triangle,' in her own time.

Margaret launched the Child Migrants Trust after a single referral for assistance, came into the local authority office in Nottingham, UK where she was working as a social worker. This led her to investigate and then to provide active support to people who had been 'migrated' from the UK to other countries as children in care over a long period, not ending until the 1960s.



Children in care setting off for a new life in 1947

In many cases the children had been told that their parents had died, which was often untrue. The children were told they were going to a new life in warm and friendly places – ‘oranges and sunshine’ but in practice many were placed on rural farms or in residential institutions in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) where they were expected to work hard. Many were badly abused and were only able to retrace contacts with their families of origin much later in life as a result of Margaret’s work and total determination.

Margaret, supported by Nottinghamshire County Council and others, set up the Child Migrants Trust to support this work, initially working out of her own home. The work of the Trust grew and eventually moved to its own offices in Nottingham. Margaret published a book called ‘Empty Cradles’ in 1994 describing the work of the Trust, later republished as ‘Oranges and Sunshine’ in 2011. This became an international best seller with all the profits being donated to the Trust.

Margaret was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in 1993 and in 2019 was elevated to an Officer in the Order of Australia (AO) recognising ‘more than 30 years of service to former child migrants and their families’. She was also appointed a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in the United Kingdom. She is probably the only social worker to hold both these high civilian honours.

Margaret is probably the only social worker who has had a feature film made of her life and campaigns, portraying her work as a social worker - ‘Oranges and Sunshine’ - starring Emily Watson as Margaret.

Margaret was a BASW member when this all started and BASW provided PR advice and support in the early stages of her campaign, when I was General Secretary. BASW support is mentioned in her book.



Former Child Migrants gather for the Royal Commission hearings in Sydney in 2015

Margaret is a passionate social worker who is proud to use the title. She is very committed to the principles of ethical practice and critical of social work agencies which do not follow ethical guidelines. She is currently working with North American universities on how governments and agencies should apologise for past social

policies and social work practice which have damaged people and not lived up to social work values.

Margaret was instrumental in gaining public apologies from the Prime Ministers of Australia and the UK for the child migrant scandal. She was also influential in persuading governments to set up public inquiries into the scandals of abuse of children by the church, residential care agencies and others which are now happening in several countries including Australia, Canada, UK and others, to which she has given evidence.

Margaret is still involved in person-to-person social work but also operates at the highest political levels with Presidents and Prime Ministers - but always puts service users first and prefers to speak alongside the people with whom she works.

The Social Work History Network organised a meeting in 2016 jointly with the Child Migrants Trust reflecting on the experience of child migrants and the implications for social work practice.

Margaret is a truly international social worker - working across borders with individuals, families and governments, mainly in the English speaking world. She is an inspirational person, totally committed to the values of social work and putting right the wrongs of past poor practice. She is past 'retirement' age but still campaigning. She is a great role model for social workers and a very suitable candidate for the Andrew Mouravieff-Apostol Medal.

David N Jones (Chair, BASW International Committee)

On behalf of BASW, AASW and CASW

19 June 2020

LINKS TO MATERIAL ABOUT MARGARET HUMPHREYS & CHILD MIGRANTS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FcIguf3mJ0> - video interview - good place to start.

Child Migrant Trust website <https://www.childmigrantstrust.com/>

<https://www.childmigrantstrust.com/our-work/governance/>

<https://www.childmigrantstrust.com/our-work/campaigns/>

Government decision for redress scheme <https://www.leighday.co.uk/News/News-2018/December-2018/Lawyers-for-former-child-migrants-welcome-historic>

Margaret Humphreys biography https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Humphreys

Oranges and Sunshine film https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oranges_and_Sunshine

Oranges and Sunshine film <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1438216/>

Oranges and Sunshine film website

https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfilms/film/oranges_and_sunshine

Guardian newspaper interview

<https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2010/feb/20/margaret-humphreys-child-migrants-trust>

Interview with Margaret Humphreys about the film

<https://metro.co.uk/2011/07/25/margaret-humphreys-emily-watsons-portrayal-of-me-was-surreal-91358/> -

An 11 year olds school project - British Child Migrants sent to Australia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLRk2B201eo>

Video about Fairbridge Farm School and Northcote Children's Farm

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3mRkm16JXI>

Book sale website <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Oranges-Sunshine-Cradles-Margaret-Humphreys/dp/055216335X>

Interview with a former child migrant – Sydney Morning Herald

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/i-can-still-hear-the-kids-screams-20110611-1fyap.html>