

Frances Brown – Who she was



**Frances Brown on the left with Helen Harris the first Frances Brown Award Winner
4th June 2005**

Courtesy Di Christensen

Frances Brown was appointed the first Family & Local History Librarian at the State Library of Victoria (SLV) in 1986. The SLV was the first State Library in Australia to introduce a genealogical collection. Frances introduced many new resources to assist in family history research. An example was the introduction of Genieguides, which were a listing of all resources for a particular area. She also instigated the Genealogy Publications programme which raised much-needed revenue through the publication and sale of Victorian directories. These fragile records were preserved on microfiche and the funds raised were used to expand the Library's Genealogy collection.

Frances was a co-author of *Family and Local History Sources in Victoria*, fondly known as “the little red book”, which was re-printed many times and became a very popular guide to family history resources within Victoria. The profits were all donated to the Genealogy Publications programme.

Frances spoke at many conferences and seminars and regularly contributed articles to family history journals. She also served on the councils of both the Genealogy Society of Victoria (GSV) and the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies (AIGS).

Frances was the convenor of the First Victorian Family History State Conference in May 1995. The idea for a state organisation was born out of the co-operation and collaboration established during the organising of this conference. When the Victorian Association of Family History Organisations (VAFHO) was formed in November 1996, Frances was elected President. Her vision and efforts have left a lasting legacy in Victoria.