



Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition History:

2014 sees the re-emergence of the Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition under the auspices of the Queensland Braille Writing Association. In this, our Diamond Jubilee Year at Braille House, Vision Australia has kindly relinquished the right to conduct this competition in favour of Queensland Braille Writing Association and in so doing has generously offered to sponsor some of the major prizes.

History: The competition was started in 1921 by the "Queensland Musical, Literary and Self Aid Society for the Blind as an Essay Competition; the subject was "Self Reliance" and first prize in each category was One Guinea.

Both Harold Dickinson and his brother Edwin were members of the QMLSAS and were very involved in the literary and musical world at that time although Harold averred that it was Edwin who was the literary brother. Edwin died in January 1956 but his name continued to be synonymous with the competition.

The Society changed its name in 1966 to Queensland Society of Blind Citizens and in 1986 it acquired royal assent to use the prefix Royal. Then it all became complicated! In 1988, the name of the organisation was shortened to Royal Blind Society of Queensland. In the decade that followed a number of amalgamations occurred of organisations serving the VI community. The QBIC (Queensland Blind Industrial Centre) had become part of the QFBP (Queensland Foundation for Blind People) (previously Queensland Training and Placement Centre for the Blind in which the Dickinsons – Harold and Mercy – were founders together with Malcolm Bryce and Eric Searle). The QBIC component separated and became Vision Queensland. The QFBP became the Royal Blind Foundation of Queensland and continued so until 2006 when it and Vision Queensland became part of Vision Australia.

We at Braille House are especially pleased to be able to continue and perpetuate the Competition with the Dickinson name attached because Mercy Dickinson, Harold's wife, was a volunteer proofreader and teacher of braille at Braille House for many years. Mercy was thus happy to be able to give back in kind for the services she herself had received when QBWA volunteers transcribed many of her texts while she was at State High School and later when she became the first blind student to go through and get her first degree at Queensland University in 1939.

We welcome participants in the renewed Dickinson Memorial Literary Competition and wish you all good luck and a happy writing experience.

Patron: His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC Governor of Queensland

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