

# Foreword

Rita Huggins is one of those universal spirits who makes indelible footprints on the hearts of those who have ever met her.

Generous of spirit, she has enriched people by her presence.

After meeting Rita Huggins, one could never ask, 'Rita who?' Bland and insipid are words that could never be applied to her.

For those who have never met her, you can now read her story.

It is not a fashionable story of how she suddenly found her 'Aboriginal identity'. On the contrary, it is a story of an Aboriginal woman who, because she was 'cosmetically apparent', had to endure the hurts and innuendoes of racism which was and has been the lot of fellow visible Aboriginal people in Australia.

Her reactions to those hurts and innuendoes of racism meant that, in turn, Rita Huggins was sometimes passionate, fiery, feisty, quiet, dignified, reflective, but never bitter and unforgiving.

How she managed to retain her warrior spirit, along with a lack of bitterness, has both inspired and intrigued younger Aboriginal women of my generation.

My life has been enriched through knowing her and her trials and triumphs.

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This vivacious and dynamic woman — in all her hues and all her multitude of emotions — is proof of the enduring spirit of Aboriginal people in this country, particularly Aboriginal women.

Rita Huggins's story is first and foremost about being Aboriginal in Australia, being a woman, and last but not least, being a truly universal spirit.

**Lillian Holt**

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