



Sheila Humphries

Archdiocese of Perth

Sheila Humphries is an Aboriginal Nyoongar woman from the Yuat tribe. A gifted artist, she is well known for her paintings of the six Yuat Aboriginal seasons. Each painting shows the special places, animals and plants of each Yuat season, and one painting includes a rosary. Sheila was asked to present one of her paintings to the late Pope John Paul II.

Sheila's mother had 9 daughters and a step-son to care for. Three daughters died young and in 1944 when Sheila was nine her mother placed her and her five sisters and brother in an orphanage hoping that they would get a better education. She later decided to take her children back but after three months back home, Sheila was arrested and returned to the orphanage. She grew up in St Joseph's Orphanage for aboriginal girls New Norcia.

Her mother died when she was eleven and Sheila became a ward of the state until she turned eighteen. She married Bill Humphries when she was 20. They had 8 children. When the youngest was in 4th grade Bill encouraged her to study. He was a mentor for her and a wonderful role model for Aboriginal men. She worked in juvenile detention in Perth and in the Goldfields. Tragically her husband died from cancer. Sheila is shown sitting next to Bill's photo.

Sheila has been artist-in-residence and has taught aboriginal art, culture and bush tucker at the West Australian monastic town of New Norcia. She believes that art, like religion, is about understanding the past to find a way forward. Although she was part of the Stolen Generation, her paintings reflect healing, reconciliation and faith.