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BELMONT

Woman of the year

Sophie Moore

BELMONT Business Woman of the Year Nita Sams still loves a good book, even after 30 years in the bookbinding business.

"I'm an avid reader and we get some beautiful books, really lovely hand-drawn ones; I never get tired," she said.

Sams was delighted to receive recognition for her work at the 23rd Belmont West Australian Small Business Awards, at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre last month.

"Everybody likes to feel appreciated, especially in a room full of such talented people," she said.

Sams completed an apprenticeship in hard case binding in the UK at a time when the bookbinding and restoration industry was run by men.

"When I went for a job with a local printer (in Australia), I was told no.

"I said, is there any job of any kind and he said, you can work on the bench... folding paper basically."

When the man employed to restore the books went on leave, her employer asked Sams to cover his job.

"I asked, 'do I get the same pay?' and he went 'no!'"



Artisan bookbinder Nita Sams won the Belmont Business Woman of the Year award. communitynews.com.au 461639

Classic Bookbinders was handpicked by the WA Catholic Church to design and produce a comment book for display in the Vatican, following the death of Pope John Paul II.

Sams said the Belmont business has remained unaffected by the digital revolution, with people continuing to treasure having something to hold, or leave as a legacy for the next generation.

"Our work comes from all quarters. Wedding albums, 21st birthdays. We restore many family bibles, bind family histories and collections of clippings; if someone likes racehorses and wants the magazine pages they've collected put into a book... we get all sorts," she said.

It was while working for Snap Printing that Sams was convinced by her co-worker to quit her job and start a business together.

"As though it were that easy," she said.

More than 30 years later, Classic Bookbinders is still a successful, local family business. Along with her

husband, son and daughter, Sams credits a loyal and talented team for her success.

"We have an in-house training program because the courses at Tafe aren't good enough, the government just doesn't provide enough funding," she said.

See all the award winners, pages 20-25