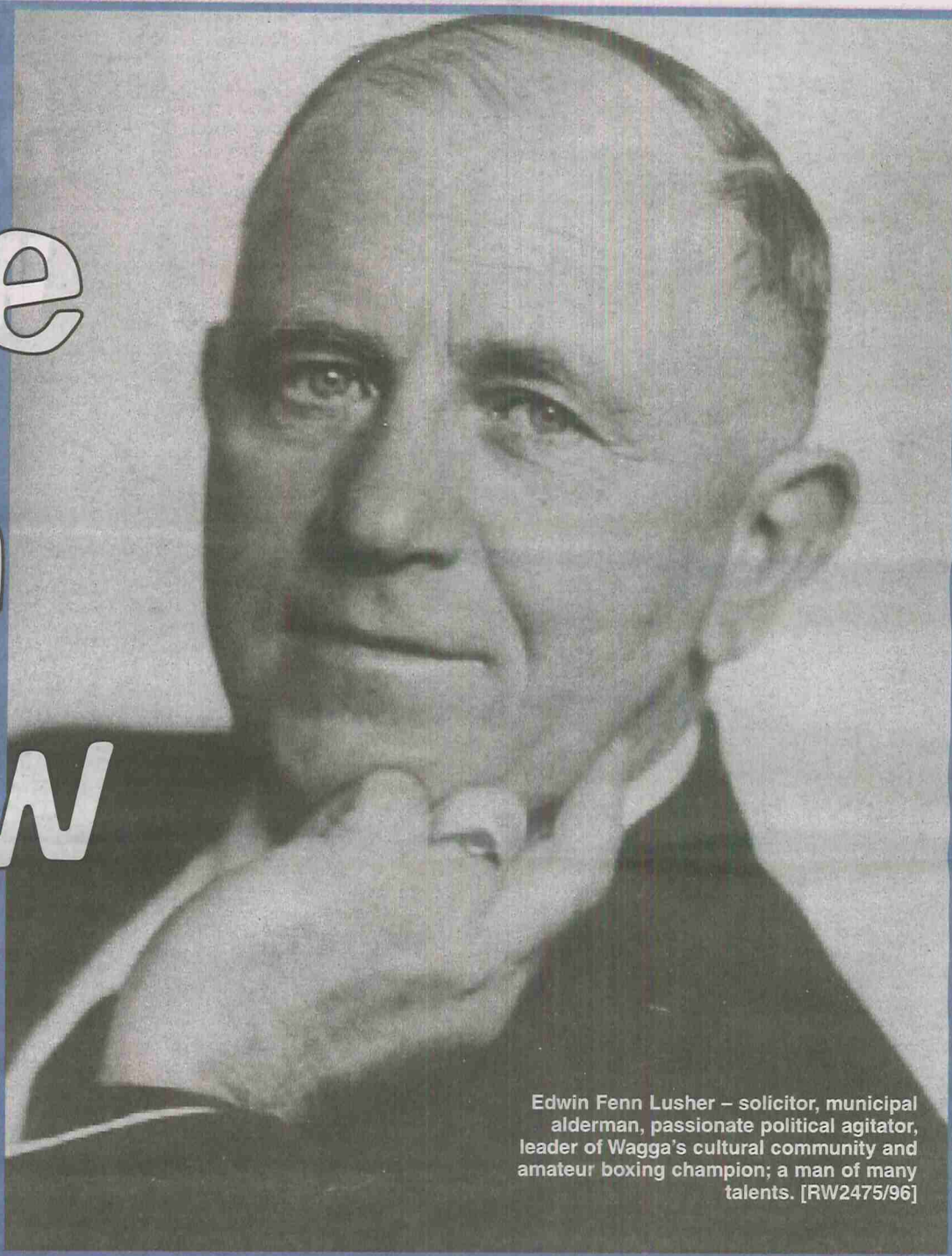


### CSU Regional Archives Saturday openings:

The CSU Regional Archives is extending its opening hours to include the first Saturday of every month. This initiative has been put in place to cater for those researchers who are unable to visit the archives on weekdays during normal business hours.

The next Saturday opening will occur on August 4, from 10am to 3pm.

# More than a law man



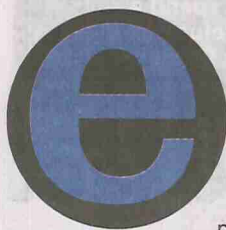
Edwin Fenn Lusher – solicitor, municipal alderman, passionate political agitator, leader of Wagga's cultural community and amateur boxing champion; a man of many talents. [RW2475/96]

## what you need to know

■ The CSU Regional Archives are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building on South Campus of the university, access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue. Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with inquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straight-forward inquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour, including copying and postage. For further information, phone 6925 3666, email [archive@csu.edu.au](mailto:archive@csu.edu.au), or visit our website at [www.csu.edu.au/research/archives](http://www.csu.edu.au/research/archives) for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.

## at the archives

Wayne Doubleday



Edwin Fenn Lusher was a strong member of the Wagga community.

Most would remember him as one of our city's prominent solicitors, but he had many interests and was heavily involved in Wagga's political and cultural life.

Lusher arrived in Wagga with his wife Jean and two daughters on December 1, 1926, from Sydney, where he had been employed in the Crown Law Office. He became business partners with Charles Throsby Young and Fredrick Charles Stellway, creating Lusher, Young and Stellway Solicitors. Their offices were situated in Fitzmaurice Street, next door to the Union Bank of Australia (what is now Boyce Chartered Accountants).

### Political life

IN FEBRUARY 1928, Edwin Fenn Lusher was elected to the Wagga Municipal Council after the resignation of alderman Chandler.

He was then chosen to be deputy mayor in December 1929. Lusher served on council for nearly 10 years, choosing not to stand for re-election in 1937. However, his role in local government was not yet over as he became solicitor for the Wagga Council from 1941 until his death in 1952.

Lusher played a pivotal part in the political movements of the Riverina in the 1930s. In 1931 he was chairman of the "Great Riverbank Meeting". This meeting was attended by an estimated 8000 people from the Wagga region to protest against the government's responses to the effects of economic depression. Lusher made passionate speeches on the rights of the primary and secondary industries and the faults of the government.

Three options were put forward at the meeting:

1. To call on state and commonwealth governments to immediately effect drastic reductions in the cost of government, to relieve industry, both primary and secondary, from statutory burdens, to give immediate financial relief to primary producers, to prepare proposals to enable future interest charges to be reduced, and so lower the costs of production.

2. That, in the event of such governments refusing to recognise or failing to give effect to such resolutions by March 31, 1931, immediate steps be taken to hold a referendum on the question of the right of Riverina to determine its own affairs and control its own destiny as a free people under the British Crown, if necessary by succession, with its consequent diversion of taxation from existing governments.

3. That the committee which arranged this meeting be and hereby is appointed to conduct any such referendum in a fair and proper manner, with power to appoint returning officers and do all, such further and other things in their opinion necessary to give effect to the will of this meeting.

This meant that if the state and commonwealth governments did not agree to their first proposal, the appointed committee would begin to take actions to secede from the NSW government and create their own state. However, with the change in government the following year, the economic environment improved and The New State Movement petered out in the Riverina.

Lusher continued to exert political influence in Wagga and district for many years. He was president of the Wagga branch of the United Australia Party, a forerunner of The National Party and was a member of the NSW Country Party State Executive. From 1944, he was a vocal member of the Murrumbidgee Regional Convention on post-war planning and was chairman for many years. After visiting England in 1949 he purposed many constructive ideas on the betterment of Wagga.

### Cultural Life

EDWIN Fenn Lusher was elected to the School of Arts committee in 1934 and was president from 1935 until his death in 1952.

Under his leadership, many significant changes were made to the school. Previously, the main

purpose of the School of Arts had been as a library, but in 1946 the school donated all of its books and fittings to the Wagga Council to establish a public library. In 1944, the School of Arts Literary and Dramatic Society was established and the musical society joined the School of Arts to become the Music Club. In 1945, the society performed its first play for the general public.

In 1936, Lusher was granted life membership of the School of Arts. *The Wagga Express* reported on July 18, the following words: "Mr. J. N. Small in seconding the motion ... remarked on the enthusiasm of the president, which had lifted the institute out of a rut. His term of office had been very impressive and convincing and the institute was placed on such a plane that it was easy for the public to fall behind for its future advancement."

Through the School of Arts, Lusher was able to enhance Wagga's creative environment. He organised for public figures and famous artists, such as the soprano, Joan Sutherland, to visit Wagga. He also encouraged play competitions and sponsored art exhibitions. Lusher was also involved in the Rotary Club and was president from 1946 to 1947.

In his youth, Lusher had a successful career as an amateur bantam weight boxer. He was runner-up NSW champion in 1906; in 1907 he won the NSW Championship, the Interstate Championship and the Australasian Championship and in 1908 he won the NSW Championship but was runner-up in the Australasian Championship.

After his death on June 8, 1952, the following tribute by Mr. Quiggin SM was recorded in *The Daily Advertiser*, "I myself, held Mr. Lusher in the highest esteem. I was impressed, along with other magistrates, by his skill as an advocate and great knowledge of the law, but above all by his keen sense of humour. This sense of humour made him the very formidable advocate in court."

■ Compiled by Alice Carlin

References: *150 Spectacular Years Wagga Wagga School of Arts 1859-2009* by Nancy Blacklow; *Newspaper Cuttings Books, Lusher Family Papers*, CSURA RW1741/1/MF; *The Daily Advertiser* - June 9 1952, June 11 1952, March 2 1931; *The Street Names of Wagga Wagga* by William Ellis; *The Wagga Wagga Express* - July 18 1936; Wagga Wagga City Council Minute Books 1928-1937, CSURA RW2608/24-25.