

Wally Matthews

When Walter Frederick Matthews died in February 1954 Member for Orange, Charles Cutler, announced: *"It is given to few men to serve their community as Dr Wally Matthews served this district in public life, and no less, to serve their country as he did."*

Dr Matthews, who practised in Orange for 34 years, was an alderman on Orange Council from 1931 until 1950, and serving as mayor for 12 years. At the time, Matthews was the city's longest serving mayor.

Born in Bellingen in 1884, Matthews was educated at Sydney Grammar School and St Andrew's College. He studied medicine at Sydney University, graduating in May 1910, and opening a medical practice in Warialda.

In 1915 Wally enlisted for service in the First World War. He served for four years in Greece and France. After the conclusion of the war he relocated to Orange, purchasing the medical practice of Sir Neville Howse. Matthews was instrumental in the establishment of an ambulance service and a blood donation service in Orange. He also led the local anti-tuberculosis campaign and was the town's first person to be X-rayed.

A keen cricketer and footballer, Wally played rugby union for New South Wales in 1906, 1908 and 1910. He managed the AIF rugby team which toured England, Scotland, Wales and France following WWI. And in 1933 he was selected as tour manager for the Wallabies visit to South Africa.

Following Matthews' death former mayor Jack Jaeger stated: *"his whole heart and soul were for the betterment of Orange and its people, regardless of colour, class or creed."*

Matthews Avenue and Matthews Park in Orange were named in honour of Dr and Mayor Wally Matthews.