



MARIA LLUÏSA

Algarra

Maria Lluïsa Algarra Coma

First woman judge. Playwright and screenwriter

Barcelona, 1916 – Mexico City, 1957

The career of this pioneer can be reviewed from two approaches: one as the first woman judge, although she was only in office for two months, and the other as a playwright with a brilliant career in Mexico, where she arrived fleeing the Spanish Civil War.

She was the daughter of a wealthy Catalan family. She studied law at the Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona (name adopted by the University of Barcelona during the Second Republic), a degree she completed at the age of twenty. Her career as a playwright began with her first play, *Judith*, which won a prize in a university competition and was performed in 1936 at the Teatro Poliorama.

The first women judges, magistrates and prosecutors were appointed during the civil war. Maria Lluïsa Algarra was the first woman judge appointed on 2 December 1936 by the Minister of Justice of the Generalitat de Catalunya, Andreu Nin, a member of the POUM (*Diario Oficial de la Generalitat de Catalunya*, n. 339, 4 December 1936, p. 844). It is recorded that she was a law graduate at the time, although certain people doubt it.

When the PSUC took over the Department of Justice of the Generalitat, she was dismissed by Rafael Vidiella in February 1937. She attended the first National Women's Congress, held on 6 and 7 December 1937 at the Palau de la Música in Barcelona.

It seems that after Barcelona fell to Franco's troops, she went to France and from there to Mexico. There are various versions of her membership of the French Resistance or whether she was sent to one of the French exile camps (Argelés, Bacarés or Saint-Cyprien).

It is recorded that she entered Mexico on 29 April 1939 and arrived there on 21 April. She had an extraordinary and brilliant career as a playwright in Mexico, where she married the

Mexican painter José Reyes Meza. She died prematurely in 1957. In Granollers there is a street named after her.

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