

Margaret Thatcher Graduate Award Information

Margaret Thatcher was a British politician, who is most famous for being the first female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

Born: 13th October 1925 in Grantham, Lincolnshire

Died: 8th April 2013 aged 87 in Westminster, London

Family: Her father was Alfred Roberts, originally from Northamptonshire, and her mother was Beatrice Ethel from Lincolnshire. She and her older sister Muriel spent her childhood in Grantham, where her father owned two grocery shops.

Early life: Margaret was introduced to politics from a young age, as her father was an alderman and local preacher at the local Methodist church. Margaret was a very conscientious girl. Her school reports showed 'hard work and continual improvement'. She was head girl in 1942–43. In her upper sixth year, she applied for a scholarship to study chemistry at Oxford, but she was initially rejected and was offered a place only after another candidate withdrew. She graduated in 1947 with Second-Class Honours in the four-year Chemistry Bachelor of Science degree.



Main achievements: In 1959, Margaret Thatcher was elected as a conservative member of parliament for Finchley. She was named the education secretary in 1970. Five years later, in 1979, she became the new leader of the conservatives and was voted in as the first female prime minister of the UK. When she entered office in 1979, she promised that the Conservatives would cut income tax, reduce public expenditure, make it easier for people to buy their own homes and decrease the power of the workers' unions.

During her leadership, she developed the image of the "Iron Lady". She enhanced this tough reputation when she responded to the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands in 1982. She sent a naval task force who succeeded in claiming victory over the Argentines and reclaiming the islands. Following this victory in the Falklands, the conservatives won the 1983 election by a large majority.

The following year, in 1984, Thatcher began the process of shutting down the majority of the UK's coal mining pits. In retaliation, many miners attempting to stop the closures by going on strike and holding protests. Eventually, Thatcher won the conflict, closing around 167 mining pits and cut around 190,000 jobs.

Margaret Thatcher resigned as prime minister in 1990, although she remained active in politics. In 1995, she was awarded the Order of the Garter and became Baroness Thatcher.

"I stand before you tonight in my Red Star chiffon evening gown, my face softly made up and my fair hair gently waved, the Iron Lady of the Western world"

- Margaret Thatcher, 1976

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgwZQ9z3cl>

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