

## Baroness Thatcher ‘gave us a backbone’ – Lord Carey leads religious leaders' tributes

Baroness Thatcher gave Britain “a backbone” and “brought back respect”, the former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey said.



Lord Carey, who was appointed as leader of the Church of England during Lady Thatcher’s time in Downing Street, said that while there would be disagreement about politics, her time in office “transformed” the UK.

The current Archbishop of canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby, said faith has "inspired and sustained" Britain’s only female Prime Minister.

Meanwhile the Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks, who first knew Margaret Thatcher when she was his local MP in north London, said she was a “giant” who was one of the few people to leave a “personal imprint” on the country.

Lord Carey told The Daily Telegraph: “People may differ about her politics – and she divided opinion as any politician does – but there is no doubt that she transformed Britain, she brought back respect, gave us a backbone and she fought for us.

Telegraph readers remember Margaret Thatcher 08 Apr 2013

“I think she has done a great deal to strengthen our nation in her period of office.

"Although there were a lot of conflicts [such as] with the miners, as I look back now I think her instincts were absolutely right.

“The sadness of course is that she wasn’t able to enjoy to the full her final years”

He added: “On a personal level she was great fun.

“As long as you were prepared to argue your case she could be very open. I had many conversations with her I always found her a very entertaining and interesting person.

"She was at times dogmatic but I can be dogmatic too.

“She was a conviction politician, she was deeply embedded in the conservative world view and there is nothing wrong with that if you are that kind of person.

"She was a terrific person to spend time socially with.”

Lord Sacks said: “Baroness Thatcher was a giant who had a transformative impact on Britain.

“I first got to know her early on in my life when she was the local MP.

“She was loved and admired by many in the Jewish community who will miss her deeply. Few people in my lifetime have left such a personal imprint on British life.”

Vivian Wineman, president of the Board of Deputies, said Lady Thatcher had forged a particularly close relationship with the north London Jewish community as MP for Finchley.

He said: "Lady Thatcher was always extremely supportive and admiring of the ethos of the British Jewish community. "This close relationship began when her family took in a young Austrian Jewish refugee from Nazism in the late 1930s. When she entered Parliament as MP for Finchley, a very Jewish constituency, her relationship with local Jewish institutions blossomed and continued throughout her illustrious career as Prime Minister ... She was unquestionably a great statesman of the later 20th Century, and one who was a friend to the Jewish people and Israel.”

The current Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby, said: “It was with sadness that I heard the news of the death of Baroness Thatcher and my prayers are with her son and daughter, her grandchildren, family and friends. It is right that today we give thanks for a life devoted to public service, acknowledging also the faith that inspired and sustained her.”

Meanwhile the most senior Roman Catholic cleric in England and Wales, the Archbishop of Westminster, the Most Rev Vincent Nichols, said: “It was with sadness that we heard the news of the death of Baroness Thatcher, who served this country for many years both as a Member of Parliament and as Prime Minister.

"We pray for the repose of her soul and for the intentions of her family and all those who now mourn for her.”

John Bingham - The Telegraph