

The Strength of Iron

The world lost "The Iron Lady" Margaret Thatcher, the first and only female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1979), last week on Monday, April 8, at age 87 to a stroke. Thatcher was thus nicknamed in 1976 by Soviet journalist Captain Yuri Gavrilov of the Red Star, for her dogged opposition to socialism. The name stuck for the remainder of her life because of her unwavering approach in leadership.

Always a lady, often dressed in subtle navy suits, with finely coiffed hair and a handbag, Thatcher was a champion of free markets, financial discipline, strict control over public money, tax cuts and nationalism. She was often associated with Reaganomics of the United States, and was in fact a good friend with Ronald Reagan as they both came into power during the Cold War. It's been reported that even after she ended her public speaking career, she flew across the pond to attend Reagan's funeral in 2004.

It is believed that Thatcher was most influenced by her father, Alfred Roberts, who was a grocer by trade, but was also active in politics and the Methodist church, serving as a local preacher.

"The basis of democracy", she said in a 1978 interview with the Catholic Herald, "is morality, not majority voting. It is the belief that the majority of people are decent and that there are moral standards which come not from the State but from elsewhere. The law is to regulate what you must not do to one another. My freedom must be regulated by your freedom. My freedom to hit out stops at your chin."

Although some conservatives disagree with opinions and bills she supported, Lady Thatcher was considered by many, especially women, as a personal hero who embodied their ideals. Thatcher's funeral will be performed today, April 17,

at St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

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