

BROOKES, BEATA ANN (1930 - 2015), politician

Name: Beata Ann Brookes
Date of birth: 1930
Date of death: 2015
Gender: Female
Occupation: politician
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements
Author: Matthew W. Day

Beata Brookes was born on 21 January 1930 in Rhuddlan, Flintshire, the daughter of George Brookes, a farmer and property developer, and his wife Gwendoline. She attended Lowther College in Abergele and the University College of North Wales, Bangor. She also won an American State Department scholarship to study politics in the USA. This was followed by a brief visit to Australia to study local government structures. Throughout her youth Brookes was active in local Conservative politics, and was chair of the Welsh Young Conservatives. She was briefly married to Anthony Arnold, but they divorced in 1963.

Beata Brookes had various careers, working on the family farm, as company secretary to a tourism and catering company, and later as a social worker for Denbighshire County Council, and as a TV researcher for HTV in Cardiff. She is best remembered for her varied and active role within north Wales politics.

Her first political role was as an elected executive of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, the voluntary wing of the Conservative Party. She was also elected as a Conservative to Rhyl Urban District Council in 1955, becoming the only female councillor to sit on the council at the time.

As an active Conservative supporter with no family, Beata Brookes was considered an excellent female candidate to stand for election to the House of Commons; this she would do several times with no success. She stood in the marginal Labour seat of Widnes in the 1955 general election, which she lost by only 1,449 votes, and also stood unsuccessfully in the Warrington by-election of 1961 and for Manchester Exchange in the 1964 general election. In 1970 she was defeated for the West Flint nomination by Sir Anthony Meyer.

Brookes was elected as Conservative MEP for North Wales in 1979. However, she subsequently made a final attempt to enter the House of Commons in the 1983 general election with the newly created North-west Clwyd seat. This led to a drawn-out Conservative Party candidate selection between Beata Brookes, **Geraint Morgan**, sitting MP for Denbigh, and Sir Anthony Meyer, sitting MP for West Flint. Brookes was a popular candidate with the support of local Conservative activists, and she won the selection vote in March 1983. However, Meyer eventually won this contest in May after the previous decision was reversed in the courts.

Brookes held the North Wales seat in the European Parliament from 1979 until 1989. She was one of the few female members of the Conservative Party to hold a position of authority at the time. In the European Parliament she was a member of several committees including the Education Committee, the Agricultural Committee, and the European Affairs Committee of the Council of Professions Supplementary to Medicine, drawing on her expertise from her voluntary work and as a previous member of the Welsh Hospital Board. Brookes was an ardent supporter of Europe and worried if Britain ever left what it would mean for jobs, especially as certain industries in north Wales were reliant on EU funding. She eventually lost the North Wales seat in the 1989 European Parliament election to the Labour candidate; this would be the last time she ever held an elected political position.

Outside of politics, Brookes is remembered for her voluntary work throughout north Wales, serving as a member of the Welsh Hospital Board from 1963 to 1974. In 1973 she became a member of the Clwyd Area Health Authority, the Family Practitioner Committee, and served on the Clwyd County Council Social Service Committee. She was actively involved with charities which focused on aiding the disabled and various other health organisations in Clwyd. She also chaired the Welsh Consumer Council. She was awarded a CBE in 1996.

Brookes remained active in Conservative politics after her time as MEP, and was the chair of the Welsh Conservative Party in the 1990s. She supported John Major in 1993 at a time when he was losing the support of the core party. Her later years were marked by disillusionment with the Conservative Party under David Cameron, over issues such as the coalition with the Liberal Democrats. As a result, in May 2013 she joined the United Kingdom Independence Party, UKIP. She earned the occasionally used nickname of the 'Celtic Iron Lady,' due to various similarities between herself and Margaret Thatcher, in particular her uncompromising mindset whilst she was an MEP.

Beata Brookes died on 17 August 2015 in a care home in Wrexham.

Author

Matthew W. Day

Sources

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'Ex-Conservative MEP Beata Brookes joins UKIP,' BBC News, 3 May 2013

Further reading

Wikipedia Article: *Beata Brookes*

Additional Links

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Day, M. W., (2023). BROOKES, BEATA ANN (1930 - 2015), politician. *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. Retrieved 8 Nov 2024, from <https://biography.wales/article/s14-BROO-ANN-1931>

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