



WATKINS, TUDOR ELWYN, Baron Watkins of Glantawe, (1903-1983), Labour politician

Name: Tudor Elwyn Watkins
Date of birth: 1903
Date of death: 1983
Gender: Male
Occupation: Labour politician
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements
Author: John Graham Jones

Tudor Watkins was born on 9 May 1903 at Abercrave in the Swansea Valley, the eldest of ten children of Howell Watkins, coalminer, and his wife Anne (née Griffiths). His father was a Labour County Councillor, a JP and a Baptist deacon and lay preacher. Tudor received his education at the local elementary school, evening continuation classes, university tutorial classes, classes organised by the WEA and the National Council of Labour Colleges, and later (as the recipient of a bursary) at Coleg Harlech. He earned his living as a coalminer from the age of 13½, 1917-25, and then as the Labour Party agent in the Brecon and Radnor constituency, 1928-33. He was general secretary of the Breconshire Association of Friendly Societies, 1937-48. He was an alderman of the Breconshire County Council, 1940-74.

He served as Labour MP for the Brecon and Radnor constituency from the general election of 1945 until his retirement in 1970. He was known locally as the man who always put the needs of his constituency before party politics. He was one of the group of five Labour MPs who gave constant support to the tenacious Parliament for Wales campaign of the early 1950s, contrary to the directive of the Labour Party centrally. Watkins was the PPS to **Rt. Hon. James Griffiths**, the first Secretary of State for Wales, 1964-66, and to **Rt. Hon. Cledwyn Hughes**, 1966-67. He was chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Agriculture, 1966-68. He was also a member of a large number of committees, among them the Welsh Panel of the British Council (to which he was appointed in 1954), the Wales Tourist Board, the Brecon and Radnor Hospital Management Committee, the Civil Aviation Advisory Committee for Wales, and the Mid-Wales Industrial Development Association. He was created Baron Watkins of Glantawe (life peerage) in 1972. After his retirement from parliament, Watkins devoted much of his time to serve local government; he was an alderman and chairman of the Breconshire County Council. In 1970 he was appointed chairman of the new Border Counties (Wales) Hospital Management Committee and served until the reorganisation of the health service in 1974. He was also the first chairman of the new Powys County Council, 1974-77 and Lord Lieutenant of Powys from 1975 to 1978. He was the chairman of the Brecon Beacons National Park Committee, 1974-78. He also served as secretary of the Abercrave Athletic Club, Cricket Club, Ystalyfera Football League and the Horticultural Society and Show. He was a lifelong diabetic, but always strove to conceal this handicap from his constituents.

Watkins married on 13 April 1936 Bronwen, the third daughter of T. Strather of Talgarth. There were no children. They made their home at Bronafon, Penyfan Road, Brecon. He died at Brecon War Memorial Hospital on 2 November 1983 and was cremated at Llwydcoed Crematorium. Lady Bronwen Watkins died 29 August 2007.

Author

Dr John Graham Jones

Sources

Who was who?

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Additional Links

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