

Farewell to Conservative Stalwart Lord Norman Tebbit

July 31, 2025

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A funeral service will be held this Thursday at St Edmundsbury Cathedral in Bury St Edmunds to honour the life of Lord Norman Tebbit, a towering figure in post-war British Conservatism. Lord Tebbit, who died peacefully at home on 7 July at the age of 94, was a close political ally of former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and a central figure in shaping Conservative policy during the 1980s.

Born in 1931, Lord Tebbit held several senior roles in government, including Secretary of State for Employment and later for Trade and Industry. As Employment Secretary, he played a pivotal role in curbing the influence of trade unions during a time of economic and industrial upheaval, helping to lay the groundwork for Thatcher's economic reforms. Between 1985 and 1987, he served as Chairman of the Conservative Party, guiding it through a successful general election campaign in 1987.

A defining moment in his personal life came in 1984 when he was seriously injured in the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) bombing of the Conservative Party conference in Brighton. The attack left his wife, Margaret Tebbit, paralysed. Following the 1987 election, Lord Tebbit stepped back from frontline politics to care for her. She passed away in 2020.

After standing down as a Member of Parliament in 1992, Lord Tebbit was elevated to the House of Lords, where he continued to speak out on matters of national interest. Known for his forthright views and strong convictions, he remained a respected and influential voice within the Conservative Party and beyond.

The funeral will feature tributes from senior party figures. Former Conservative Party leader Iain Duncan Smith is expected to give a reading, while the eulogy will be delivered by Conservative peer and political author Lord Michael Dobbs. Conservative leadership candidate Kemi Badenoch paid tribute to Lord Tebbit, describing him as an "icon in British politics" whose passing would be felt "across the political spectrum." Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson hailed him as "a hero of modern Conservatism" and "a great patriot," noting that his values were "needed today more than ever."

Lord Tebbit's family has requested that any donations in his memory be directed to St Nicholas Hospice and the East Anglian Air Ambulance, two charities with local significance.

His legacy as a principled, combative figure who championed Conservative ideals during a period of significant national transformation remains firmly embedded in modern British political history.