

PERSONAL

Thatcher

I was greatly moved by your generous and ~~courageous~~ letter of today. I am saddened beyond words both by the loss of your ~~great~~ ^{contribution} ~~outstanding~~ ^{valuable} contribution as a member of the Government and by the tragic circumstances in which that loss has come about.

During the time when I was Leader of the Opposition, I knew that I could count absolutely on your abilities and your support. So it was natural that you should have been one of those to whom I looked ~~principally~~ for help in Government. The list of the offices which you have held in the 4½ years since 1979 - Minister for Trade, Paymaster General and Chairman of the Party, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and now Secretary of State in charge of the combined Departments of Trade and Industry - is sufficient evidence of how much I asked of you; and your response was absolutely outstanding.

Amongst many memories, I will never forget your strength and staunchness during the Falklands crisis and your brilliance as a departmental Minister, first as Minister for Trade and then as Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. But in the history of our Party, the magnificent election victory of 1983 will always be associated with your name: the organisation and high morale of Central Office will be remembered as your achievement. The debt which the Conservative Party owes to you cannot be exaggerated.

I need not tell you how deeply Denis and I have felt for you and Ann and your family during this ~~terrible~~ ^{difficult} time for you; and we are both enormously heartened by the courage with which your letter shows that you are now looking to the future together. I am ~~strengthened too~~ ^{cheered} by the thought that we shall ~~remain friends and~~ ^{you both} that I shall continue to have your support. Let us see each other often: I shall continue to need your advice. ~~and your~~ ^{and your} support in the House.

For now, I send you my heartfelt thanks for your magnificent work in the service of our Government and our Party, and Denis joins me in sending you and Ann and your daughters all our good wishes ^{and I will think of} for the future.