

Obituary Baroness Ros Howells (January 10, 1931 – October 14, 2025)



Baroness Ros Howells after receiving her Honorary Doctor of Civil Law Degree from the University of Northumbria in 2014

Rosalind Patricia-Anne George was born in the Parish of St Patrick's, Grenada, and spent most of her childhood in Crochu in St David's. She attended St Joseph's convent. Being raised in a political family bestowed on her a resilience and a self belief that she has marshalled in many a struggle for the rights of people. The sisters at St Joseph's Convent remembered her as the student who kept saying "that is not right". Indeed Baroness Howells and her family played a significant role in the history of Grenada, the wider Caribbean and in the lives of the Diaspora. Her older sister, Dame Hilda Bynoe, who was the St. George's University (SGU) Schools of Arts and Sciences (SAS) and Graduate Studies (SGS) Commencement Speaker in 2006, was the first Governor of Grenada and Baroness Howells served for a short time as Deputy High Commissioner for Grenada in

London in the years just prior to the revolution. In her own words she was happy, and knew it was a privilege, to serve Grenada during its good and its bad times.

Baroness Howells moved to the UK in 1951 her ambition was to become a lawyer but these plans were always put on hold as finances were limited and she held many jobs to help make ends meet. One of these jobs was in a public library where she met and later married John Charles Howells and they had two daughters Anne and Amanda.

The late 50's and 60's ushered in a period of emigration of peoples from all over the Commonwealth to the UK. It was a difficult period of adjustment and one in which Baroness Howells played an important role which continued late into her career where her experience was drawn upon by people from all walks

of life – from Prime Ministers, sporting celebrities, to members of the general public.

Early on in her career in the UK Baroness Howells accepted a post in a youth club, founded by Sybil Phoenix who had herself emigrated from Guyana to the UK, where they worked with unsupported mothers. Baroness Howells learnt the true meaning of racism and was exposed to real prejudice. But she met with community workers, such as Sybil Phoenix who were dedicated to eradicating the cancer of racism. Her soft spoken and well thought out arguments delivered in a reasoned but firm manner soon brought her to the notice of those she was seeking to influence – and also to the Press who listened when Baroness Howells spoke in the chamber in the House of Lords. Everyone appreciated that Baroness Howells held herself to strong moral and ethical standards.

She had a genuine interest in people and their welfare which was apparent to all as she continued her community work, often in very difficult circumstances, using her welfare and counselling skills, learnt theoretically during her studies at South West London College and City College in Washington DC, and honed practically at the very sharp end in the community. She worked hard to persuade others they were wrong in their attitude to those whose skin colour, or gender, more than any lack of skills, prevented them from contributing equally in the work force. Baroness Howells moved from Lewisham to Greenwich where as a member of the Race Equality Council her message resonated in places of worship, the local authority, local businesses – indeed no one was left out. Her work made a considerable difference. Baroness Howells served on numerous boards, councils and committees – the London Voluntary Service Committee, the Board of the University of Greenwich, the Greater London Race Equality Council, the Year of the Child and many more. From 2009 to 2014 she was Chancellor of the University of Bedfordshire.

For her work Baroness Howells was awarded the OBE in 1994 and entered the House of Lords where she served from 1999 till 2021.

Baroness Howells never forgot nor neglected her home country of Grenada which she returned to as often as her schedule permitted. She served as a member, advisor and patron of many Grenadian organisations. She was a great and valued supporter of SGU and served as a member of the Academic Advisory Board at a particularly important time – the decade which saw the institution grow from a School of Medicine into the university we know today which has four Schools. Baroness Howells also served on SGU's UK Trust and became a member of the WINDREF Board of Trustees in 2005. She later became President of WINDREF in 2013.

Baroness Howells was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Civil Law in 2014 from Northumbria University and regularly addressed the students of the Keith B Taylor Global Scholars Program at their orientation at the start of their term.

A London newspaper said of her “Walking with Lords but she keeps her feet firmly on the ground”. She was often listed among the World’s greatest and inspirational People and her work was recorded in many documentaries.

Baroness Howells served as the SAS/SGS Commencement Speaker in 2014 and received SGU’s highest recognition for service, the Distinguished Service Medical, in recognition of her contribution to the university’s development. As President of WINDREF, she took a great deal of interest in all of our programs, but especially in the Sports for Health program, which was named after her at a dinner hosted at the House of Lords by Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior in 2010. It was at this same dinner that a 17 year old athlete, Kirani James, attended and his remarkable career was followed closely by the Baroness and WINDREF. It is an honour and a privilege to have known Baroness Howells, and we were fortunate to be guided by insight and integrity for the past decades. May her soul rest in eternal peace.