



Diane Abbott
1953 -

POLITICIAN

Growing up, Diane was something of an outsider. The only black student at the Harrow County Grammar School for Girls, Diane was fiercely independent. Unhappy with her progress at school, Diane studied at her own rate and won top marks, but her boldness did not gain her teachers' support even when she was accepted at Cambridge University. Despite her teachers, her parents were always supportive. They knew that she would have to be twice as good as the other students to succeed.

Diane studied History at Newnham College, Cambridge. Class divisions set her apart from the other students and she was often lonely. Diane thinks of this time as character-building and she did not let it stop her from helping people. After graduating she worked as a civil servant, served on the National Council for Civil Liberties and was a reporter for Thames Television. Always looking for a way to make real change in the world, Diane turned to politics. A long-time member of the Labour Party, Diane first ran for office in 1982 when she served on Westminster City Council. In 1987 she made history when she became the first black woman elected to Parliament, representing Hackney North and Stoke Newington.

As an MP, Diane has been passionate about fighting for human rights and civil liberties. Always dedicated to her party, she has taken on many roles, including shadow secretary of state for public health and shadow home secretary. She continues to serve and was re-elected in 2017. Race and class discrimination were hurdles Diane had to face along the way, but with her determination and her passion for public service she has made her mark.

