

# 'I beat Theresa May to Prime Minister's role 42 years ago'

Luke  
Sproul

WHEN they were faced with the challenge of Theresa May in the race to become Prime Minister, Andrea Leadsom, Michael Gove, Stephen Crabb and Liam Fox dropped like flies - not to mention Boris Johnson.

But Banbury woman Rosalind Hicks-Greene went one better by beating the new PM to the top job in 1974.

The mum-of-three went up against Mrs May - then Theresa Brasier - in a mock election at Wheatley Park School on the same day Britain went to the polls to decide between Ted Heath and Harold Wilson.

Ms Hicks-Greene, representing the Liberals, won 136 votes to Conservative candidate Mrs May's 104, with Valerie Fortescue coming third for Labour on 39.

She said: "Theresa was an obvious Tory and I was an obvious Liberal. We each made a speech in assembly and then debating took place and I won. Theresa was fine about it, it was all a bit of fun.

"It is fascinating to have done it. I am the only person in the UK to say I beat her to becoming Prime Minister." Mrs May was moved up a year in school as a highflying student and studied A-level history alongside Ms Hicks-Greene before going on to read geography at Oxford University.

Ms Hicks-Greene started at the school when it was Holton Park Girls' Grammar before it merged to become Wheatley Park School in 1971.

She said: "Going into politics was always something Theresa was likely to do. She was always a serious person. I thought she might have become a university lecturer. She was quite studious but she knew how to make her opinions heard.

"We would have some lively debates in A-level history lessons and she always went off and did all the background reading."



**TOP OF THE POLLS:** Rosalind Hicks-Greene, centre, celebrates after beating Valerie Fortescue, left, and Theresa Brasier, right to become 'Prime Minister' in 1974, as recorded in *The Oxford Times*. Inset, Valerie and Theresa in 2016

While Mrs May ended up becoming an MP in 1997 before moving into the shadow cabinet and the government, Ms Hicks-Greene went straight to work at Blackwell's Bookshop in Broad Street after she finished school.

She later qualified as a barrister and now works in London, but still lives in Banbury. She said: "In many ways I have done the exact opposite of Theresa. But I think she is absolutely the right person to be in 10 Downing Street and leading the country.

"She is a safe pair of hands and she will be a good negotiator. She will be a match for Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande and I

should know because we locked horns once."

Ms Hicks-Greene said she supported Mrs May despite not being a Conservative herself, and believes the Prime Minister's views have moved to the centre since their election debates in 1974.

She said: "She was what I would have called a Thatcherite, although it was before Margaret Thatcher was Conservative leader. Her politics were more right wing than today. Now she has more old-fashioned liberal values."