# Maggie Smith, beloved actor and gay icon passes away at 89



Maggie Smith, the prolific and multi-award-winning actor known for her roles in The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, Harry Potter, and Downton Abbey, has passed away at the age of 89.

The news was confirmed by her sons, Chris Larkin and Toby Stephens, in a statement. They expressed: "She passed away peacefully in hospital early this morning, Friday 27 September.

"An intensely private person, she was with friends and family at the end. She leaves two sons and five loving grandchildren who are devastated by the loss of their extraordinary mother and grandmother.

“We would like to take this opportunity to thank the wonderful staff at the Chelsea and Westminster hospital for their care and unstinting kindness during her final days.

“We thank you for all your kind messages and support and ask that you respect our privacy at this time."

Maggie Smith's talent for acid-tongued comedy was a cornerstone of her most significant achievements. She won an Oscar for her role as the waspish teacher, Jean Brodie [pictured], and delivered memorable performances in prim period pieces such as A Room with a View and Gosford Park.

Her collaborations with gay writer Sir Alan Bennett on both stage and screen, including The Lady in the Van, further solidified her position as a comedic powerhouse. "My career is chequered," she told the Guardian in 2004. "I think I got pigeonholed in humour... If you do comedy, you kind of don’t count. Comedy is never considered the real thing." Nonetheless, Smith also shone in dramatic roles, performing opposite Laurence Olivier for the National Theatre, earning a best actress Bafta for The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne, and taking on the titular role in Ingmar Bergman’s 1970 production of Hedda Gabler.

But quite apart from being a consumate artist, Dame Maggie was a ferocious wit. Kenneth Williams once told the story of the time they went bra shopping together and a shop assistant showed Maggie a bra for what she considered an extortionate price. 'It would be cheaper to have your tits off,' she told the shop assistant.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)