While at Oxford, where she studied chemistry at Somerville College, Margaret Roberts did not give-up her love of politics. In her first term, she joined the Oxford Union Conservative Association (OUCA). Winston Churchill was her hero; there was never a question that she would be anything but a Conservative.

One of her biographers - John Campbell - observes that the university environment wasn't exactly what Margaret thought she'd find at Oxford:

... she went up naively expecting to find rational inquiry but met only arrogant superiority. This was her first encounter with the liberal establishment and she did not like it. (John Campbell, The Iron Lady, page 13 of the 2009 paperback edition.)

Although she studied with a future Nobel Laureate - Dorothy Hodgkin - she was also a student of Janet Vaughan. Proud of Somerville's left-wing stance on political matters, Vaughan - the college's Principal - never really understood Margaret:
Margaret graduated from Somerville in 1947, but even as she left Oxford, she knew her education wasn’t complete. She wanted to be in politics and believed a law degree would be a better stepping stone.

Before studying law, however, Margaret worked as a research chemist. Her first job, in that field, was at BX Plastics where she - and her female colleagues - were paid 12.5% less than their male counterparts.

In February of 1948, Margaret became the Conservative candidate for Dartford - an area where the Labour party had a significant majority. She was selected over her male rivals because she had so eloquently attacked the Labour Government during her interview process.

One of her potential rivals was a local businessman - Denis Thatcher - who ran a family-owned, paint-manufacturing company. Although he was not running for office, Denis was curious to meet the candidate.

Ten years older than Maggie - and previously married to another girl named Margaret (who’d left him while he was fighting in the war) - Thatcher liked the new candidate. He offered to give her a lift to the train station.

Never expecting to be elected, by Labour-dominated voters in Dartford, Margaret substantially narrowed Labour’s majority in the 1950 election. Crushed when she lost again - in 1951 - she decided to follow a different path.

Despite her second defeat, Conservative voters in Dartford were impressed with her. On the 19th of November, 1951, an evaluator assessed the unelected candidate's personal and professional abilities. She was one "amazing young woman," the writer said, and “should not be lost sight of." She was 26 at the time.

Still studying law, she married the man she'd fallen in love with - Denis Thatcher. At their wedding - on the 13th of December, 1951 - Margaret wore a navy blue velvet dress with a matching hat. Its ostrich plumes framed her face.

Two years later, Margaret gave birth to twins called Mark and Carol. Deciding to spend some time with her children, until they were a bit older, Maggie waited until 1959 before she ran for Parliament again. Meanwhile, she finished her law degree, passed the bar exam and worked as a barrister (specializing in tax law).

By 1959, when her children were six years old, she stood for election and won. Margaret Roberts Thatcher was the new Member of Parliament for Finchley (a district in the northern-London borough of Barnet). Three months later, she participated in an interesting interview with the BBC.
Margaret Thatcher - Oxford Student
Image of Margaret Roberts Thatcher, during her university days, online courtesy Oxford University.
View this asset at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Margaret-Thatcher-Oxford-Student

Janet Vaughan - Somerville College
Photo of Dr. Janet Vaughan, taken by Bassano on 17 May 1963, online courtesy Oxford University.
View this asset at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Janet-Vaughan-Somerville-College

Margaret Thatcher - Research Chemist
Image of Margaret Roberts, in 1950, online courtesy Margaret Thatcher Foundation.
LICENSE: CC BY-SA 3.0
View this asset at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Margaret-Thatcher-Research-Chemist

Margaret Thatcher - Autograph Seeker
Photo online, courtesy Margaret Thatcher Foundation.
LICENSE: CC BY-SA 3.0
View this asset at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Margaret-Thatcher-Autograph-Seeker

Margaret Roberts - MP Candidate, 1950
Photo of Margaret Roberts Thatcher, in 1950, online courtesy Margaret Thatcher Foundation.
LICENSE: CC BY-SA 3.0
View this asset at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Margaret-Roberts-MP-Candidate-1950
Margaret Thatcher - Young Campaigner
Photo online, courtesy Margaret Thatcher Foundation.
LICENSE: CC BY-SA 3.0
View this asset at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Margaret-Thatcher-Young-Campaigner

Margaret Thatcher in 1951
Photo of Margaret Thatcher, Conservative candidate for Dartford, 1951 - online, courtesy Margaret Thatcher Foundation.
LICENSE: CC BY-SA 3.0
View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Margaret-Thatcher-in-1951

Denis and Margaret Thatcher - Wedding Photo
Wedding photo of Denis and Margaret Thatcher, online courtesy Margaret Thatcher Foundation.
LICENSE: CC BY-SA 3.0
View this asset at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Denis-and-Margaret-Thatcher-Wedding-Photo

Margaret Thatcher with Twin Babies
Margaret Thatcher with her twin babies, online courtesy Margaret Thatcher Foundation.
LICENSE: CC BY-SA 3.0
View this asset at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Margaret-Thatcher-with-Twin-Babies

Margaret Thatcher and Her 6-Year-Old Twins
Margaret Thatcher with her 6-year-old twins, in 1959. Photo online, courtesy Margaret Thatcher Foundation.
LICENSE: CC BY-SA 3.0
View this asset at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Margaret-Thatcher-and-Her-6-Year-Old-Twins
Margaret Thatcher - The Long Walk to Finchley
Clip from Margaret: The Long Walk to Finchley (2008), copyright BBC, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes. Andrea Riseborough plays the role of Margaret Thatcher while Rory Kinnear plays the role of Denis. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Margaret-Thatcher-The-Long-Walk-to-Finchley