

Hamilton Spectator

[Thatcher's visit to Hamilton was a 'wow night'](#)

Reporter: Daniel Nolan / Tuesday, April 9 2013

It was the day the Iron Lady came to the Steel City to raise some silver — and it's a day **Kevin Smith** will never forget.

The former British prime minister came to Hamilton Sept. 19, 1992 to speak at a fundraiser for the **Firestone Regional Chest and Allergy Unit at St. Joseph's Hospital.**

More than 800 people attended her speech at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum at the Hamilton airport, including **Smith**. Now **President and CEO of St. Joseph's Healthcare System, Smith** was then working at McMaster University's Faculty of Health Sciences and helped organize the dinner.

Smith sat at a table near the front and, after the evening was over, recalled people were just bowled over by her. He remembers thinking she was a very small woman, but her stature was anything but.

"I think it was a really 'wow' night," **Smith** said. "Here was this remarkable woman who left an indelible mark on the world ... Whether you liked her policies or not, you were a bit swept away by her delivery."

In her address, Thatcher said the West should be prepared to use its air power against Yugoslavia if the ethnic violence sweeping that nation at the time did not end.

She said the West should give Yugoslavian leaders "an ultimatum that unless they desist from their ethnic cleansing — something we never expected to see in our lifetime — we would, in fact, use all our great air power against all their military targets, supply lines and bridges." She also spoke about Britain's place in the European Union and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Smith recalled she put her hand on her hip during the speech and appeared "very Churchillian."

"She had that finger pointing," **Smith** said. "She had that finger and I remember she would wag it up and down while she was speaking ... Her speech that night was quite remarkable. She was unequivocal and absolutely sure of what she said."

Smith also recalled Thatcher "loved" the museum and the fact it had a restored Lancaster bomber.

"She said, 'How exciting to see there's a working Lancaster here,'" **Smith** said. "I think she was a bit surprised to see one in this smaller community, relative to London where she was coming from."

Thatcher's visit raised \$75,000 for the **hospital** unit, which is renowned for its research into respiratory problems.

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