



Brenda Hale - Baroness Hale of Richmond

The first female President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom

A woman has been appointed as the most senior judge in the UK for the first time, as statistics show women and ethnic minorities remain under represented in the judiciary.



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Forthright in her views and a champion of diversity, Baroness Hale is a trailblazer whose life has been full of firsts.

Born in Yorkshire, Brenda Hale is a grammar school girl whose parents were both head teachers.

She achieved the only starred first in her year at the University of Cambridge, before going on to be the youngest person and first woman to be appointed to the Law Commission.

Lady Hale played a significant role in introducing a number of reforms to the law, including the Children Act 1989, which is widely acknowledged as the UK's most important piece of legislation protecting children.

In 2004, she became the first woman to be appointed as a Law Lord.

In 2009, with the establishment of the UK Supreme Court, she became its first female justice.

In 2013, she became its first deputy president and has now become first female president.



The percentage of female judges in the Court of Appeal has seen a slight rise from 18% to 24%, and from 18% to 22% in the High Court.

But there is still a woeful lack of diversity, with just 28% of court judges being female and only 7% coming from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Shortly after her appointment as the first female Law Lord, she said the gender and ethnicity of judges matters "because democracy matters".

"We are the instrument by which the will of Parliament and government is enforced upon the people. It does matter that judges should be no less representative of the people than the politicians and civil servants who govern us."
