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Tributes to Michael and Nichola Colvin flood in after fire tragedy

A gentleman and a patriot

TRIBUTES have poured in for former Waterside MP Michael Colvin and his wife Nichola who died in a fire at their house last week.

Mr and Mrs Colvin perished in a blaze which completely gutted their £3 million mansion, Tangle House, near Andover, on Thursday night.

Hampshire Police and Hampshire Fire Brigade are keeping an open mind about the possible cause as investigations are carried out.

Mr Colvin represented the old Romsey and Waterside seat from 1983 to 1997 when the boundaries were changed. For the last three years he was MP for Romsey.

New Forest East MP, Dr Julian Lewis, took over the Waterside reins when the boundary changes were made. He paid this tribute to Michael and Nichola: "He was a true gentleman and a great patriot, dedicated to the defence of the United Kingdom.

"It is often said that constituents with married MPs get two for the price of one. In the case of Nichola and Michael Colvin, this was absolutely true.

"Westminster and Hampshire are poorer for the loss of this golden and dedicated couple, our hearts go out to their family."

Close friend and Hampshire MEP, Roy Perry, said: "We all realise we have lost a genuine and devoted couple who put public service first.

"I feel honoured to have known and

worked with them both."

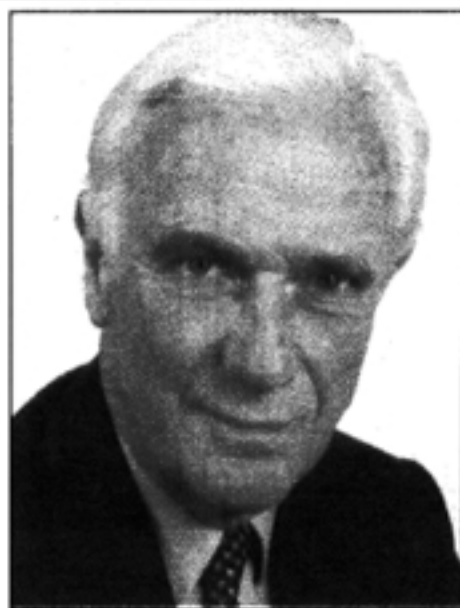
Hampshire County Council leader, Councillor Ken Thornber, called Michael a "champion of rural life."

He added: "He constantly campaigned on rural issues and worked tirelessly for his constituents.

"Nichola was always at his side. She was a tremendous support throughout his career and was herself well-loved by her constituency association."

Nichola Colvin was on the Board of Trustees of Wessex Cancer Trust.

The charity's chief executive, Roz Smith, said: "Nichola and her hus-



▲ Michael Colvin

band Michael gave willing and unstinting support to the charity.

"Both Nichola and Michael were truly sincere and kind people who gave us very personal commitment, even though they both led such busy lives. They will be missed dreadfully."

Tory squire loved the country

MICHAEL Colvin was described as one of the last true Tory squires whose greatest political passion was fighting for rural Britain and farming.

He was born on September 27 1932, the son of Captain Ivan Colvin RN.

Educated at Eton, he then went on to Sandhurst and a commission in the Grenadier Guards, serving in Berlin in 1950 and Cyprus in 1956.

He met and married Nichola Cayzer, daughter of shipping magnate Lord Cayzer, and left the army in 1958.

The couple moved to Tangle in 1963 and Michael began farming.

His first taste of politics came in 1964 when he was elected to the parish council. The 1960s and 70s saw

Michael serve as a councillor for Andover Rural District Council, Test Valley District Council and Hampshire County Council.

In 1975 he was the Conservative parliamentary candidate for Bristol North West. He won the seat in 1979. In 1983 he transferred to the safe new seat of Romsey and Waterside.

In Parliament Mr Colvin took up particular interests in defence, aviation and rural issues.

He attracted controversy in his time, especially in his support for white South Africa during apartheid.

Mr Colvin supported hunting and opposed gun control.

Michael and Nichola Colvin leave a son and two daughters.