

## **Monarchy is a potent force in modern life**

The death of Diana should not overshadow the tireless work of the royal family, writes Noel Cox

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The world-wide outpouring of grief at the death of Diana Princess of Wales serves to remind us that the monarchy remains a potent force in modern life.

Since 1981 the attention of the world's press has been focused upon the Princess of Wales, almost to the exclusion of the other members of the Royal Family. The hard work and devotion to duty shown by these other members of the Royal Family have been largely ignored, so much so that their public standing has been affected in consequence.

Diana was not, contrary to the popular impression, as active in public works as many of the other adult members of the Royal Family, indeed, since last year she had largely retired from public life. She differed from the other members of the Royal Family only in the degree of media exposure which she attracted. While the contribution of Diana Princess of Wales was important, it should be seen in perspective.

The Prince of Wales, in particular, has often suffered from a hostile press. In addition to his various official duties, representing The Queen, he has maintained a close interest in, and involvement with, a wide range of issues. In particular, he has focused on industry, the problems of the inner cities, and the difficulties faced by unemployed young people. He is involved with over 200 organisations covering a wide field- the arts, medicine, education, conservation, archaeology and sport. He set up and has been President of the Prince's Trust since 1976, of Business in the Community since 1985 and of the Prince's Youth Business Trust since 1986. Public attention has been focused upon the Prince's interest in architecture, the environment, and education. But he has rarely received the same degree of coverage as Diana Princess of Wales.

The Princess Royal undertakes some 500 engagements a year, and has visited over seventy countries. Much of her travel has been undertaken as President of The Save the Children Fund, an office she has held since 1970. She is involved with the Riding for the Disabled Association, and is patron or president of nearly 100 other organisations. She has become increasingly concerned with the effects of crime, and is also involved with a number of medical specialities.

Although a full-time naval officer, the Duke of York has continued to take his part of the public duties of a member of the Royal Family. He has undertaken a number of overseas trips. He is president or patron of a number of organisations, particularly concerned with maritime or aviation matters. He is also involved with young people's organisations.

Diana, as the first Princess of Wales for more than seventy years, attracted a great deal of publicity. She offered her own unique contribution to the Royal Family. But the principal function of members of the Royal Family is to support the Sovereign.

For over forty years the Queen has devoted her life to the service of her people. In her 1991 Christmas Broadcast she declared, "With your prayers, and your help .. shall try to serve you in the years to come".

The best way to honour the memory of Diana Princess of Wales, and to help The Queen fulfil her role, is to give our support to the Royal Family. There can be no doubt that, like The Queen, the Prince of Wales has always had a strong sense of dedication. Charles and his sons are left to continue their royal destiny.

Prince William, like his father before him, has no choice of action. He is his father's heir whether he desires it or not. But without the support and understanding of the public his task will be that much harder.

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