ANITA RODDICK BIOGRAPHY



**Anita Roddick was born to Italian immigrant parents in Littlehampton in 1942. A natural rebel as a child, she trained as a teacher before undertaking a working trip around the world.**

Having married Gordon Roddick in 1970, the couple opened a restaurant and hotel in their home town and had two baby daughters.

She went on to work for the United Nations where she travelled extensively and met people from a number of different cultures. These experiences would help shape her future career.

The birth of the ‘The Body Shop’ came about in 1976 due to a need by Roddick to create a livelihood for herself and her daughters while her husband was trekking across the Americas. The first Body Shop was basic and at first sold only 15 lines.

Thanks to her own earlier travels, she had a wealth of experience and exposure to the body rituals of women from all over the world from which to draw. The frugality of her mother also helped Roddick to take a fresh look at retail with such concepts as refillable containers.

Roddick’s timing couldn’t have been better as the public were starting to look to ‘greener’ companies and products. Thus, she became the first to introduce socially and environmentally responsible business onto the High Street and began talking about fair trade long before it became a buzz word. The Body Shop today is a business with 1,980 stores serving over 77 million customers in 50 different markets and 25 different languages.

The Body Shop's Mission Statement sets out a dedication to the pursuit of social and environmental change. The shops and products help communicate human rights and environmental issues. Throughout her career, Roddick continued to campaign tirelessly against environmental and social wrongs around the world.

In 2003, Roddick's achievements were recognised when she was knighted by the Queen, and officially styled as Dame Anita Roddick.

Three years later, the Body Shop was purchased by L'Oreal for £652.3 million. This caused controversy, partly because L'Oreal is said to be involved in animal testing, and partly because it is said to be part-owned by multinational conglomerate Nestlé.

While Roddick had been a strong campaigner on ethical issues, Nestlé was been the subject of a long standing boycott call for its marketing of baby milk powder in third world countries.

In February 2007, Roddick revealed that she had been diagnosed with Hepatitis C. She said she contracted the virus through a blood transfusion while giving birth to her youngest daughter, Sam, in 1971. She was also suffering cirrhosis of the liver, one of the long-term effects of the disease.

In typical style, Dame Anita began campaigning for Hepatitis C to be taken more seriously as a "public health challenge".

In September 2007, Roddick was taken to St Richard's Hospital in Chichester after complaining of a headache. Tragically she suffered a major brain haemorrhage and died soon after. Her husband, Gordon, and daughters Sam and Justine were all with her.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown led the tributes to Dame Anita, calling her an "inspiration" to businesswomen.

He said: "She campaigned for green issues for many years before it became fashionable to do so and inspired millions to the cause by bringing sustainable products to a mass market."