



## HINDS,, JOHN DARWIN VIVIAN (1922 - 1981), politician and community activist

**Name:** John Darwin Vivian Hinds

**Date of birth:** 1922

**Date of death:** 1981

**Parent:** Leonard Hinds

**Parent:** Gwenllian Hinds (née Lloyd)

**Gender:** Male

**Occupation:** politician and community activist

**Area of activity:** Politics, Government and Political Movements

**Author:** Myya Helm

John Darwin Hinds was born on 28 December 1922 in Maerdy, Glamorganshire, and grew up on Morgan Street in Barry. His mother, Gwenllian (née Lloyd), born in Barry, was a resolute homemaker, and his father, Leonard Hinds (1887-1942), a merchant seaman turned coal miner, had come to the United Kingdom from Barbados. Leonard served as a fireman on merchant ships in the First World War and earned the Mercantile Marine War Medal in 1919, awarded to those who served at sea for at least six months and on at least one voyage through a danger zone. After the war, Leonard settled and began working as a coal miner in Maerdy. Gwenllian and Leonard had six children, including John's older sister, **Elvira Gwenllian Payne** (1917-2007), who became Wales's first Black female councillor.

Like his father, John Hinds initially worked in the coal mines in Bargoed for a few years after finishing school. However, he then had the opportunity to work in the Colonial Office in London, which led to his political awakening. He joined the Labour Party, and upon his return to Barry began work to improve social empowerment in south Wales. It was around this time that he also converted to Islam following a near-death experience with tuberculosis.

Hinds had a successful career in Welsh local politics. He became Wales's first Muslim and Black councillor when he was elected to Barry Town Council in 1958. A fluent Welsh speaker, he was one of only three Welsh-speaking councillors. In 1975, he made history again as the first Muslim and first Black mayor of a County Council in Wales (and in Britain) when he was elected mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan. His sister Elvira Gwenllian Payne served as his Lady Mayoress. His dedication to community activism was evident as he worked to alleviate various social problems, including housing insecurity. He also championed disability justice by advocating for establishing a local branch of the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.

John Darwin Hinds died on 15 March 1981. He was a trailblazer who broke barriers of race, religion, and representation in public office during his career. Today, his legacy stands as a testament to the contributions of Black Muslims in Wales, and his pioneering work in politics and community activism has shaped a more inclusive vision of Welsh identity.

### Author

**Myya Helm**

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### Further reading

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### Additional Links

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