

# Helmut Kohl – father of reunification

■ **Apr 3, 1930:** *Helmut Kohl* born into conservative, Roman Catholic family in Ludwigshafen, Germany – third child of civil servant *Hans Kohl* and wife *Cäcilie*

■ **Early life:** Drafted into army in World War II but misses combat. Joins *Christian Democratic Union* (CDU) party in 1947. Earns doctorate in politics in 1958

■ **1960:** Marries *Hannelore Renner* (right). Couple have two sons, *Walter* (born 1963) and *Peter* (1965)

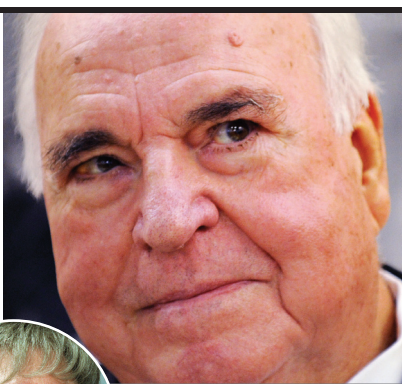
■ **Entry into politics:** Wins legislative seat in West German state of Rhineland-Palatinate (1959). Elected as state's minister-president (1969) and CDU chair (1973)

■ **1976:** Runs for chancellor in federal elections but loses vote to *Helmut Schmidt*.



■ **1982:** Becomes chancellor after Schmidt loses vote of no-confidence. Kohl easily re-elected in 1987

■ **1988:** Receives Charlemagne Award with then French President *François Mitterrand* for efforts towards European unification



■ **1989:** Collapse of Berlin Wall and Soviet control over eastern Europe. Kohl takes lead role in advocating East and West German reunification

■ **1990:** Signing of reunification treaty. Kohl elected chancellor of unified Germany



■ **1993:** Joins other European leaders to promote Maastricht Treaty and monetary union

■ **1998:** German voters reject Kohl after 16 years as chancellor

■ **1999:** Awarded U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom by *Bill Clinton*

■ **2001:** Pays substantial fine to avoid fraud charges over misuse of CDU party funds. Hannelore commits suicide after long illness

■ **2002:** Retires from politics

■ **2008:** Suffers stroke and fall. Marries his 43-year-old partner, *Maïke Richter*, while still in hospital

■ **June 2015:** Reportedly in intensive care in hospital after two operations