

A portrait of actress Judi Dench with short, white hair, wearing a light green shawl over a white top. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

Today in History

December 9, 1934

▲ **Oscar-winning British actress Judi Dench was born. A star of stage and screen for 70 years, she reached mass audiences as spy chief M in seven James Bond films**

1905: The separation of church and state in France established secularism but guaranteed freedom of worship

1979: The WHO certified that smallpox had been eradicated after a global vaccination campaign

2004: New Zealand passed a law giving same-sex couples equal civil rights as married couples

2008: Astronomers described a giant black hole at the centre of our galaxy, 27,000 light years from Earth