

Árni M. Mathiesen

Minister of Finance

Árni M. Mathiesen was born in Reykjavík, 2 October 1958, and is the son of former MP and cabinet minister Matthías Á. Mathiesen (b. 6 August 1931) and his wife Sigrún Þorgilsdóttir Mathiesen (b. 27 December 1931). On 1 June 1991 he married flight attendant Steinunn Kristín Friðjónsdóttir (b. 27 April 1960). Steinunn is the daughter of former MP and cabinet minister Friðjón Þórðarson and his wife Kristín Sigurðardóttir. Árni and Steinunn Kristín have three daughters, Kristín Unnur (b. in 1996) , Halla Sigrún (b. in 1997) and Arna Steinunn (b. in 2001).

Árni graduated from Flensborgarskóli in Hafnarfjörður with a university entrance diploma in 1978. He studied veterinary medicine at the University of Edinburgh, qualifying as veterinarian in 1983, adding to this qualifications in fish pathology from the University of Stirling in 1985 (M.Sc. Aquatic Veterinary Science).

After completing his studies, Árni worked as veterinarian in various areas of Iceland and served as veterinary officer for fish diseases 1985-1995. He was also the managing director of the aquaculture firm Faxalax hf. 1988-1989.

Árni M. Mathiesen was chairman of the Flensborgarskóli student association 1977-78, president of Stefnir, the association of young conservatives in Hafnarfjörður 1986-88, and vice-president of SUS, the association of young conservatives in Iceland 1985-87. He was a member of the Board of the Guarantee Division of Aquaculture Loans 1990-94, of the Board of the Icelandic Veterinary Association 1986-87 and on the salary council of the Confederation of University Graduates 1985-87. He was chairman of the team handball division of his local FH club 1988-90 and was a member of the Flensborgarskóli school board from 1990-1999. Árni M. Mathiesen was an Icelandic representative on the Nordic Council 1991-95; he has been a member of the Board of Búnaðarbanki Íslands and of the Agricultural Loan Fund and the chairman of the Council of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Árni was also a member of the EFTA/EEA parliamentarians' committee from 1995-99.

Árni was elected to Parliament on behalf of the Independence Party in 1991. He was then the youngest member of Parliament at the age of 33. Árni was Minister of Fisheries from 1999 to 2005 when he became Minister of Finance.