

## WHOOPI GOLDBERG Biography

Background: Whoopi Goldberg began performing at age eight in New York with the Children's Program at the Hudson guild and the Helena Rubinstein Children's Theatre.

In 1975, she moved to San Diego, where she appeared in the San Diego Repertory theatre's productions of Bertold Brecht's "Mother courage" and Marsha Norman's "Getting Out," and honed her comedic skills as part of an improvisational group called Spontaneous Combustion.

Later, she moved to the Bay Area and joined the Blake Street Hawkeyes Theatre in Berkeley, partnered with David Schein. Moving shortly into solo performances, Goldberg created "The Spook Show," which she performed in San Francisco and then toured throughout the United States and Europe.

It was at 1983 performance of that show, performed at the Dance Theatre Workshop in New York, that Whoopi caught the attention of Mike Nichols, who offered to present her in her own Broadway show. An evening of original material, written and created by Whoopi, the show opened to the Lyceum Theatre to critical acclaim. She later taped the show for an HBO special, "Whoopi Goldberg: Direct From Broadway" and the record album of her Broadway show won a Grammy Award as Best Comedy Recording of the Year in 1985.

Her Broadway show also turned out to be an audition for Steven Spielberg, who was casting film version of Alice Walker's "The Color Purple." Before making her auspicious motion picture debut in "The Color Purple," Whoopi briefly returned to San Francisco to star as the legendary Moms Mabley in "Moms," a one-person show which she co-wrote, based on the late comedienne's original material.

Film: "The Color Purple" launched Whoopi Goldberg's film career and, in addition to an Oscar nomination, earned her the 1985 Golden Globe Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Dramatic Motion Picture, as well as the NAACP Image Award for Best Actress in a Motion Picture.

Since "The Color Purple," Whoopi has starred in such motion pictures as "Jumpin' Jack Flash," "Burglar," "Fatal Beauty" (for which she won a second Image Award), "Clara's Heart," "Ghost," "The Long Walk Home" (earning her a third Image Award), "Soapdish" and Robert Altman's "The Player."

Whoopi's performance as Oda Mae Brown in "Ghost" — the highest-grossing movie of 1990 — earned her the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress, the Golden Globe Award, the NAACP Image Award, the British Academy (BAFTA) Award, the Movie Award, an American Comedy Award and the Saturn Award (presented by The Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror Films).

Whoopi starred in the 1992 box-office hit "Sister Act," which to date has grossed over \$300 million worldwide and garnered her yet another Golden Globe Award nomination and the NAACP Image Award for Best Actress in a Motion Picture, in addition to winning the Image Award for Motion Picture of the Year. Her film credits also include her Image Award-nominated performance in "Sarafina!," "Made in America," "Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit" and "Corrina, Corrina."

During the summer of 1994, Whoopi appeared in a cameo role in "The Little Rascals" and appeared in Paramount's feature film, "Star Trek: Generations." She went on to star in Warner Bros.' "Boys on the Side," directed by Herbert Ross and co-starring Mary Louise Parker and Drew Barrymore; "Moonlight and Valentino," with Kathleen Turner, Elizabeth Perkins and Gwyneth Paltrow; "Eddie" and "Bogus," opposite Gerard Depardieu and directed by Norman Jewison; "The Associate" and as Myrlie Evers in Rob Reiner's dramatic "Ghost of Mississippi," opposite Alec Baldwin and James Wood.

Television: On television, her appearance on 1986 episode of "Moonlighting" earned her an Emmy Award nomination as Best Guest Performer in a Dramatic Series. Whoopi starred with Jean Stapleton in CBS' "Bagdad Café," and she appeared for five seasons as Guinan on the hit syndicated series, "Star Trek: The Next Generation," for which she was nominated for an Image Award. Whoopi also appeared in the CBS

Schoolbreak Special, "My Past Is My Own," for which she was nominated for a Daytime Emmy Award, and she starred in the CBS telefilm, "Kiss Shot."

In 1991, Whoopi guest-starred on the NBC series "A Different World," which resulted in another nomination for a Prime-Time Emmy Award, this time as Best Guest Actress on a Comedy Series. She also starred in "Dead Wait," an episode of HBO's horror anthology series, "Tales from the Crypt." She appears with Glenn Close and Bridget Fonda in the Emmy-nominated HBO drama, "In the Gloaming," directed by Christopher Reeve.

Whoopi appeared in the re-make of the classic Rodgers & Hammerstein musical "Cinderella," earning an Image Award nomination playing Queen Constantina opposite Brandy, Whitney Houston, Bernadette Peters, Victor Garber and Jason Alexander. The movie garnered rave reviews and stellar ratings on ABC's "The Wonderful World of Disney" in November, 1997. She followed up with a starring role aired on ABC in November 1998. She also appeared as the Cheshire Cat in Robert Halmi's NBC special presentation of "Alice in Wonderland," which also featured Ben Kingsley, Gene Wilder, Martin Short, Miranda Richardson, George Wendt, Robbie Coltrane, Peter Ustinov and her "Corrina, Corrina" co-star Tina Majorino as Alice.

She has appeared on a variety of TV specials, including "Carol, Carl, Whoopi and Robin" (Burnett, Reiner, Goldberg and Williams, respectively); Marlo Thomas' "Free To Be...A Family," "Freedom Fest: Nelson Mandela's 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday Special" (co-host) and "The Truth About Teachers," which she hosted as part of a four-part series of specials entitled "Raising Good Kids in Bad Times."

In 1997, Whoopi guest-starred in an episode of "Muppets Tonight," the highlight of which was her duet with Miss Piggy on "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend." She also made her second appearance on "Sesame Street" and has appeared twice on CBS' "The Nanny."

Advertising/Commercials: Having starred in a popular series of commercials for MCI, Whoopi was also seen in an ad for the long-running "Got Milk?" campaign.

Producing: Whoopi co-produced the syndicated special, "A Laugh, A Tear" and appeared in and co-produced "Hot Rod Brown," a "Tales from the Whoop" special for Nickelodeon, for which she was nominated for a Daytime Emmy Award. Whoopi and her One Ho Productions also entered into a production deal with Columbia TriStar Television. The first-look, executive producing deal allowed Whoopi to develop ideas and properties for series, longform (movies for television and mini-series), specials, game shows and children's programming for all day parts.

Hosting: In 1992, Whoopi made her debut as a talk show host with "The Whoopi Goldberg Show," her own syndicated half-hour late-night talk show. She hosted the "34<sup>th</sup> Annual Grammy Awards" in 1992, as well as ABC's "A Gala For the President at Ford's Theatre" in 1993, 1994 and 1998. On March 21, 1994, Whoopi hosted "The 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Academy Awards" — the highest rated special of the 1993-94 television season — for which she was nominated for an Emmy Award. Whoopi returned to the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in 1996 to host "The 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Academy Awards" telecast, for which she earned rave reviews and another Emmy nomination.

In 1987, Whoopi, Billy Crystal and Robin Williams co-hosted HBO's now-historic "Comic Relief" benefit for the nation's homeless. Following "Comic Relief II," the trio has hosted "Comic Relief III-VIII," raising a cumulative total of more than \$40 million. Whoopi also took part in the televised "Hurricane Relief" benefit to aid victims of Hurricane Andrew.

Comedy: Whoopi toured her one-woman show, "Living on the Edge of Chaos," throughout the U.S., Canada and Australia and, in August, 1988, she performed a television special for HBO Comedy Hour, titled "Whoopi Goldberg's Fontaine... Why Am I Straight?" her second comedy album, "Fontaine... Why Am I Straight?," was nominated for a Grammy Award. In 1990, prior to embarking on her SRO six-week tour of Australia and New Zealand, Whoopi hosted yet another special for HBO Comedy Hour, "Whoopi Goldberg and Billy Connolly in Performance," followed by "Whoopi Goldberg: Chez Whoopi" in 1991.

**Narration/Voice Work:** In addition to her own comedy albums, her recordings include “Koi and the Kola Nuts,” an African folktale narrated by Whoopi with a score by Herbie Hancock for Rabbit Ears’ international collection for children, “We All Have Tales,” and she narrated the audio recording of the best-selling autobiography “Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters’ First 100 years.”

On film, Whoopi’s voice was featured in Disney’s hit animated movie, “The Lion King.” She was also heard in the live action/animated feature “The Pagemaster” and made a vocal cameo in Nickelodeon’s “The Rugrats Movie.”

She was the voice of Gaia, the spirit of Earth, on TV’s “Captain Planet and the Planeteers,” an animated action-adventure series and another performance that garnered her a Daytime Emmy Award nomination. She also lent her vocal talents to the 1993 holiday special, “Cool Like That.” She has performed on two episodes of the animated HBO series “Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales for Every Child,” as the voice Zenobia, the evil Hoodoo Diva, in “Rapunzel” and as Mother Goosberg in the CableACE Award-winning “Mother Goose: A Rappin and Rhymin’ Special,” which premiered in October 1997.

**Stage:** In the summer of 1991, Whoopi made a brief return to the legitimate stage to co-star with Timothy Dalton in a L.A. production of A.R. Gurney’s two –person play, “Love Letters.” Five years later, Whoopi performed a special one-night-only reprise of her one-woman show at Carnegie Hall in late 1996 as a benefit for the Friends In Deed organization. Shortly thereafter she began rehearsals for her bow in Broadway’s “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum,” in which she succeeded Nathan Lane in the role of Pseudolus.

“Forum” marked Whoopi’s first appearance in a book musical on Broadway and her five-month run played to full capacity and garnered rave reviews from critics and theatre goers alike during the first half of 1997. Whoopi also appeared in a staged production of “Sweet Charity,” a one-night-only benefit performance for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and she is producer of the 2002 Tony Award winning musical “Thoroughly Modern Millie.”

**Writing:** Whoopi made her debut as an author with “Alice,” a children’s book published by Bantam Books in September, 1992. Her second literary endeavor – simply entitled “Book”—was published by Rob Weisbach Books, an imprint of William Morrow & Company, in September, 1997, and became an instant New York Times Bestseller. “Book” has been published in Europe and around the world, ranked among the Top 10 on bestseller lists in such publications as the London Sunday Times.

**Humanitarian/Charitable Activities:** Whoopi is well known for her tireless humanitarian efforts on behalf of children, the homeless, human rights, substance abuse and the battle against AIDS, as well as many other worthwhile causes and charities.

**Awards & Honors:** Among her many awards and honors, Whoopi was named the NAACP’s 1991 Entertainer of the Year, and that same year she also received the Hollywood Women’s Press Club’s Golden Apple for Female Star of the Year; UCLA’s Jack Benny Award, Women in film’s Norma Zarky Humanitarian Award and The Thaliens named Whoopi “Ms. Wonderful” for the charitable contributions. Yet another highlight of 1991 was the christening of Royal Caribbean Cruise Line’s Viking Serenade, a luxury cruise ship of which Whoopi was named godmother.

In January, 1992, Nor’East Miniature roses introduced “Whoopi,” a miniature rose named for her. Whoopi was honored alongside Frank Sinatra for “Distinguished Achievement in Film” at “The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual American Cinema Awards” and she was honored with Shirley MacLaine at L.I.F.E. (“Love Is Feeding Everyone)’s Hunger Hero Award.” Additionally, she was chose as one of glamour Magazine’s “1992 Women of the year” for her professional and charitable accomplishments.

Whoopi has been honored by Harvard University’s Hasty Pudding theatricals as their 1993 Woman of the Year and by NATO/ShoWest as 1993 Female Star of the Year. In 1993, her performance in “Sister Act” earned three People’s Choice Awards and she was the American public’s top vote-getter again in 1994 and

1995 for the People's Choice Award for Favorite Actress in a Comedy Motion Picture. In 1996, she became one of Essence Magazine's "Women of the Year." She was recently named "Star of the Year" by the Motion Picture Club. She hosted President Clinton's 50<sup>th</sup> All-star birthday party at Radio City Music Hall. In 1998, Whoopi was honored with a special tribute for career achievement at the People's Choice Awards. Recent awards include the Crystal Award, presented by the City of New York.

Whoopi has been honored five times with Nickelodeon's Kid's Choice Award for Favorite Movie Actress, more than any other individual in Kid's Choice history. She is also the national spokesperson for Nickelodeon's "The Big Help," which encourages young people to pledge volunteer hours in their own communities.

Whoopi fulfilled a childhood fantasy and became part of Hollywood history in 1995 when she placed prints of her hands, feet and braids in cement in the forecourt of Mann's Chinese Theatre.