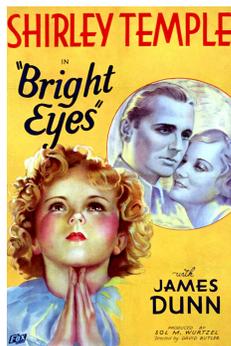


Hollywood: Her Story May 2020 ENewsletter Helping Us Through Hard Times

During the Great Depression, a significant escape for many people was the movies. Shirley Temple danced and sang her way into hearts around the country. Gracie Allen brought her humor to lighten the days. Mae West brought her double entendres and sensuality to us all. Let's learn about these amazing entertainers as we, too, endure some difficult times.



In 1932, at the age of three, **Shirley Temple** started her film career and became the number one Hollywood draw from 1935 to 1938. She became a star in 1934 when the film *Bright Eyes* was released. Her song from that movie, *On the Good Ship Lollipop*, sold more than 500,000 sheet-music copies. In February 1935, she won a special Juvenile Academy Award for her 1934 performances. From the time she was three until she was ten, Temple appeared in 29 films. America's Little Darling sang and danced in comedy-dramas in which she was often a fixer-upper, good fairy or reuniter. Her friend, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, said of her performances, "It is a splendid thing that for just fifteen cents, an American can go to a movie and look at the smiling face of a baby and forget his troubles." Temple retired from the movies when she was 22. As an adult, she became active in politics and served as U.S. Ambassador to Ghana and Czechoslovakia. Her many honors, in addition to her Oscar, include the Kennedy Center Honors and her number 18 ranking on the American Film Institute's listing of the greatest female legends of Classic Hollywood Cinema.



Like Shirley Temple, **Gracie Allen** made her debut in vaudeville when she was three years old. A talented dancer and comedian, Allen met George Burns in 1922 and a comedy act was born. As their act evolved, Burns played the straight man and Gracie became very famous for being naïve, a little crazy, innocent, and full of malaprops. The two married in 1926. They appeared together in vaudeville, on the radio, and in movies. Many of their vaudeville routines are preserved on one or two-reel short films including *Lambchops* from 1929. They appeared in two films with W.C. Fields—*International House* (1933) and *Six of a Kind* (1934). In the 1937 film *A Damsel in Distress*, Allen and Burns displayed their dancing form with Fred Astaire. The Alliance for Women in Media established the Gracie Award in her memory.



Ranked 15th on the American Film Institute's listing of the greatest female legends of Classic Hollywood Cinema, actress, comedian, and screenwriter **Mae West** is famous for her sexuality and her double entendres. Like Shirley Temple and Gracie Allen, she started her entertainment career early, at five years of age, although her professional career began when she was fourteen. In addition to performing, she wrote plays. At age 40, she signed a movie contract with Paramount Pictures where her first film was *Night by Night* in 1932. West was allowed to rewrite her scenes for that movie. Her co-star George Raft said about her rewritten scenes, "She stole everything but the camera." One rewritten scene has the following interchange: a hat-check woman says to her, "Goodness, what beautiful diamonds," and she replies, "Goodness had nothing to do with it, Dearie." By 1933, she was a huge box office draw. In 1935, she was the highest paid woman and the second highest paid person in the U.S. She wrote many double entendres and risqué statements in her dialogues. Her many famous lines include, "I believe in censorship. I made a fortune out of it." "It is better to be looked over than overlooked." And, our favorite, "I used to be Snow White, but I drifted."

Women in front of and behind the camera make the movies that we all welcome into our hearts and homes. Women across all the areas of moviemaking from actress to animator, editor to stuntwoman, costume designer to screenwriter, producer to director have contributed to the success of the movie industry since its founding in the 1890s. Help us celebrate these women who are written into movie history in *Hollywood: Her Story*.

Jill S. Tietjen and Barbara Bridges

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