

## FAMOUS MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Sometimes stardom and success seem to be in the genes. The following explores the stories of six famous mother-daughter pairs throughout history. Some of these mothers and their daughters have been famous for differing reasons. Often the daughter has become famous because of her mother, either as a result of her mother's inspiration or as a result of telling her mother's story.

Delving into history 500 years ago reveals the famous mother/daughter duo of Anne Boleyn and Elizabeth I. Ann was born in 1504. Ann was the Queen of England for three years and was the mistress then the wife of Henry VIII. Ann died at the hands of Henry VIII in 1536 when he had her beheaded for allegedly committing adultery. Anne's daughter, Elizabeth I, was born in 1533 and died in 1603. Elizabeth ruled as Queen of England and Ireland from 1558 to 1603 and was regarded as one of England's greatest rulers.

Fast forwarding over 300 years later finds our next famous mother and daughter pair. Marie Curie was born in 1867. Marie Curie was a physicist and chemist famous for being the first woman to win the Nobel Prize and one of very few individuals from either sex who won it twice. Marie earned her first Nobel Prize in 1903 with her husband and Becquerel for discovery of radioactivity; she earned her second in 1911 in chemistry for discovering radium and polonium. Marie developed the word "radioactivity" when she was researching the elements to determine if they caused nearby air to conduct electricity. Marie was the first woman to complete a doctorate degree in France, Summa Cum Laude. One month after her husband was killed in a carriage accident, Marie became the first woman to receive a position in higher

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education in France. She passed away in 1934 in the French Alps after a battle with the leukemia she contracted from exposure to radium. Marie's daughter, Eve Curie Labouisse, was born in 1904 and recently passed away in 2007. While her mother was famous for her work in the scientific community, Eve was famous for her work in the arts. Eve was a concert pianist and journalist in World War II. She was appointed head of the feminine division of the Commissariat of Information and was the official spokesperson for the women of France during World War II as well. Eve's biography about her mother received acclaim, was a best seller in the United States, and was adapted to a movie in 1943.

Laura Ingalls Wilder and her daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, are both famous for their literary contributions to history. Like Marie Curie, Laura Ingalls was born in 1867. Her famous "Little House" books began to be published in the 1930s. Laura is remembered as one of the most loved and respected authors of children's books in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Her "Little House" book series won several awards and numerous other literary works have been created based on her writing, journals, research and books, including the television series "Little House on the Prairie". In addition to her books, Laura contributed articles and poetry to magazines and newspapers including McCall's Youth Companion, Child Life and the San Francisco Bulletin. Laura's only living child, her daughter, Rose Wilder, was born in 1887 and passed away in 1968. Rose actually began her writing career before Laura and was a better known writer than Laura during most of her lifetime. Rose is attributed with conception of the "Little House" books idea and impacted the series with her editing skills. Not unlike her mother, Rose published a series of novels on the subject of pioneers and rural life including "Let the Hurricane Roar", also published entitled "Young Pioneers", and "Free Land". In the 1930s, Rose began ghost writing

including for authors Frederick O'Brien and Lowell Thomas. Rose stopped writing fiction in the late 1930s to focus on writing nonfiction books on the subjects of individualism and the search for freedom through self-sufficiency.

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century mother/daughter duo of Joan Crawford and Christina Crawford were also famous for their work in the arts, in motion pictures and writing, respectively. Joan Crawford was born in 1908 and died in 1977. Joan made over 80 movies as Joan Crawford from 1925 to 1970 along with three additional movies she made in 1925 under her given name, Lucille LeSuer. Joan won an academy award for her role in "Mildred Pierce" in 1945. In 1955 after marrying Alfred Steele, the Chairman of Pepsi-Cola Co., Joan began to make promotional appearances for Pepsi. After Alfred's death in 1959, Joan became the first female member of Pepsi's board and later became Vice President and official hostess for Pepsi. Joan's adoptive daughter, Christina Crawford, became famous after exposing her mother as an abusive parent after Joan's death in 1978. This first book of Christina's entitled "Mommie Dearest" was later made into a movie with the same name. Christina was born in 1939 and adopted by Joan in 1942. Other than her famous book, Christina worked as an actress in movies, television and stock productions from 1959 to 1972 and wrote four books between 1978 and 1994.

Also famous for their work in show business are mother, Lena Horne, and daughter, Gail Lumet Buckley. Lena Horne was born in 1917 and was a singer and actress. Lena became the first African American performer to sign a contract with a major motion picture studio in 1941. In 1942, Lena signed a seven year contract with MGM becoming the first African American woman since 1915 to sign a term contract with a film studio. In 1956, Lena signed a recording contract with RCA Victor then produced at least three albums. In 1981, Lena began her one-

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woman show entitled “Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music”. The show played successfully for two years earning Lena a special Tony Award. In 1937, Lena gave birth to Gail. In 1986, Gail published a book tracing six generations of her family’s history entitled “The Hornes: An American Family”. Gail also wrote “Blacks in Uniform: From Bunker Hill to Desert Storm” in 2001 which traces the history of African Americans in the military.

Finally, living during nearly the same time as Lena and Gail were Judy Garland and her daughter, Liza Minnelli. Judy Garland was born in 1922 and debuted at 2 ½ years old on a vaudeville stage owned by her father, Frank Avent Gumm. Judy performed with her two older sisters accompanied by their mother on the piano. Judy appeared in several movies but is perhaps most famous for her role of Dorothy in the “Wizard of Oz” in 1939; Judy received a miniature Oscar in 1940 as best juvenile performer of the year for her role in the movie. Judy was married five times and died in 1969 at 47 years old in London as a result of accidental overdose of sleeping pills. Judy Garland’s daughter, Liza, was born out of her second marriage to Vincente Minnelli in 1946. Liza has been one of a few individuals to win at least one each of Oscar, Tony, Grammy and Emmy awards. As a result of her mother’s temperament and lifestyle, Minnelli enjoyed a closer relationship with her father who secured joint custody after his divorce from Judy in 1951. Liza did not graduate from high school and never completed any formal education. Despite this lack of formal training, Liza began acting on stage in 1963, released her first album in 1964 and made her first film in 1966. Liza was the youngest to ever win a Tony for Best Actress in a Musical for the role she secured in 1965 in Broadway’s “Flora, the Red Menace.”

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Take a moment to reflect on your own mother's or even your grandmother's story.

Reflect upon how her story can inspire your endeavors or how you can or have capitalized on her legacy. Information for this article was obtained from The Biography Resource Center from Gale Cengage Learning at <http://galenet.galegroup.com>.