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ABSTRACT

This publication, which covers individuals that young readers want to know about most, entertainers, athletes, writers, illustrators, cartoonists, and political leaders, was especially created to appeal to young readers in a format where they can enjoy reading and can readily understand. Each issue contains approximately 10 sketches arranged alphabetically. Each entry provides at least one picture of the individual profiled, and bold-faced rubrics lead the reader to information on birth, youth, early memories, education, first jobs, marriage and family, career highlights, memorable experiences, hobbies, and honors and awards. Each of the entries ends with a list of easily accessible sources designed to lead the student to further reading on the individual and a current address. Obituary entries are also included, written to provide a perspective on the individual's entire career. Obituaries are clearly marked in both the table of contents and at the beginning of the entry. Entries in this volume are: Osama bin Laden (1957-); Mary J. Blige (1971-); Billy Gilman (1988-); Leanne Nakamura (Brief Entry) (1982-); Condoleezza Rice (1954-); Marla Runyan (1969-); Mattie Stepanek (1990-); and Elijah Wood (1981-). (Contains a general index.) (BT)

Biography Today: Profiles of People of Interest to Young Readers. Vol. 11, No. 2, April 2002.

Sheila Fitzgerald
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Cherie D. Abbey, Editor

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Vol. 11
No. 2
APR. 2002

Biography Today

*Profiles
of People
of Interest
Read*

Featured in this issue . . .

Osama bin Laden
Mary J. Blige
Billy Gilman
Leanne Nakamura
Condoleezza Rice
Marla Runyan
Mattie Stepanek
Elijah Wood



Mary J.
Blige



Elijah Wood



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3

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Biography Today

*Profiles
of People
of Interest
to Young
Readers*

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Preface

Biography Today is a magazine designed and written for the young reader — ages 9 and above — and covers individuals that librarians and teachers tell us that young people want to know about most: entertainers, athletes, writers, illustrators, cartoonists, and political leaders.

The Plan of the Work

The publication was especially created to appeal to young readers in a format they can enjoy reading and readily understand. Each issue contains approximately 10 sketches arranged alphabetically. Each entry provides at least one picture of the individual profiled, and bold-faced rubrics lead the reader to information on birth, youth, early memories, education, first jobs, marriage and family, career highlights, memorable experiences, hobbies, and honors and awards. Each of the entries ends with a list of easily accessible sources designed to lead the student to further reading on the individual and a current address. Obituary entries are also included, written to provide a perspective on the individual's entire career. Obituaries are clearly marked in both the table of contents and at the beginning of the entry.

Biographies are prepared by Omnigraphics editors after extensive research, utilizing the most current materials available. Those sources that are generally available to students appear in the list of further reading at the end of the sketch.

Indexes

A new index now appears in all *Biography Today* publications. In an effort to make the index easier to use, we have combined the **Name** and **General Index** into one, called the **General Index**. This new index contains the names of all individuals who have appeared in *Biography Today* since the series began. The names appear in bold faced type, followed by the issue in which they appeared. The General Index also contains the occupations, nationalities, and ethnic and minority origins of individuals profiled. The General Index is cumulative, including references to all individuals who have appeared in the *Biography Today* General Series and the *Biography Today* Special Subject volumes since the series began in 1992.

In a further effort to consolidate and save space, the Birthday and Places of Birth Indexes will be appearing only in the September issue and in the Annual Cumulation.

Our Advisors

This series was reviewed by an Advisory Board comprised of librarians, children's literature specialists, and reading instructors to ensure that the concept of this publication — to provide a readable and accessible biographical magazine for young readers — was on target. They evaluated the title as it developed, and their suggestions have proved invaluable. Any errors, however, are ours alone. We'd like to list the Advisory Board members, and to thank them for their efforts.

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Ethel Stoloff, *Retired*
Birney Middle School Library
Southfield, MI

Our Advisory Board stressed to us that we should not shy away from controversial or unconventional people in our profiles, and we have tried to follow their advice. The Advisory Board also mentioned that the sketches might be useful in reluctant reader and adult literacy programs, and we would value

any comments librarians might have about the suitability of our magazine for those purposes.

Your Comments Are Welcome

Our goal is to be accurate and up-to-date, to give young readers information they can learn from and enjoy. Now we want to know what you think. Take a look at this issue of *Biography Today*, on approval. Write or call me with your comments. We want to provide an excellent source of biographical information for young people. Let us know how you think we're doing.

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Congratulations!

Congratulations to the following individuals and libraries, who are receiving a free copy of *Biography Today*, Vol. 11, No. 2 for suggesting people who appear in this issue:

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Osama bin Laden 1957 (?) -

Saudi Militant Extremist and Suspected Terrorist
Believed to Be the Mastermind behind the
September 11 Terrorist Attacks

Editor's Note: No amount of explanation or background information can ever make sense of the terrorist attacks of September 11. Since that terrible day, many people have wanted to learn more about Osama bin Laden and his role in those events. They have wondered what could possibly inspire such rage and hatred. But to understand the life of bin Laden, there are some parts of his background that need to be explained, including his Islamic religion, his Saudi nationality, and his family history. That background infor-

mation has made this entry especially complicated. The following entry on bin Laden includes our standard biographical information, which is covered on the white pages below. But the entry also includes some background information, which is covered on the shaded pages: "Islam and Saudi Arabia" on pages 12-14; "Glossary of Related Terms" on page 19; and "Palestine and Israel" on page 23.

BIRTH

Osama bin Laden was born in about 1957 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. His full name is Osama bin Mohammad bin Awad bin Laden ("bin" means "son of"). His first name is also spelled Usama. Because Arabic is written in a different alphabet, Arabic names and other words can be spelled in a variety of ways when they are written in English. The name "bin Laden" is alphabetized under "b"; the name "bin" begins in lower case within a sentence and in capitals to start a sentence.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Bin Laden comes from an Islamic family that is both wealthy and famous in Saudi Arabia. But it's virtually impossible to discover many specific facts about his life. Reliable sources consistently disagree about these facts. While many details may be unknown, the broad outlines of his life are clear. His father was Mohammad bin Awad bin Laden. Mohammad bin Laden came from Hadramawt, Yemen, in about 1931 — in fact, he walked over 1,000 miles from southern Yemen to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He started out as an illiterate bricklayer with a small construction business. His work soon caught the eye of the Saudi royal family. Family legend says that he first came to the notice of Abdul-Aziz ibn Saud, the future king and the founder of modern Saudi Arabia, while working on one of his palaces. Mohammad bin Laden suggested alterations to the palace that would make it easier for Abdul-Aziz to get around in his wheelchair.

Soon, Mohammad bin Laden began doing construction work for the royal family. At first he would consistently underbid, or price his work lower than his competitors, in order to get the job. In time, the royal family came to rely heavily on the Binladen Group. (Many family members use this alternate spelling of the family name.) He sealed his friendship with the royal family when he built a road through difficult terrain, up a cliff, that connected the royal palace in Jeddah with the royal resort in Taif. The new route cut the length of the trip from several days by camel to several hours by car. The king later granted to bin Laden an exclusive contract to reconstruct the mosques in Mecca and Medina, two of the holy places of Islam, and the company also rebuilt the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. The Bin-

laden Group continued to grow in size and stature over the years. Today, the company has assets of about \$5 billion and employs over 30,000 people around the world. It builds roads, bridges, airports, hotels, and even military bases for U.S. soldiers. It's involved in engineering, manufacturing, telecommunications, architectural design, and real estate. The company has been the source of enormous wealth for the bin Laden family.

Mohammad bin Laden took multiple wives, which is customary in Islamic Saudi Arabia. He could only have four wives at a time. He remained married to his first three wives, but he would rotate his fourth wife. He would marry a woman, have children, get divorced, and then marry a new fourth wife. Osama bin Laden's mother, now called Hamida Al Attas, was a fourth wife. She was Syrian and considered more liberated than the other wives. She wore suits made by the French fashion designer Chanel, and when she traveled overseas she refused to wear the burka, the all-covering veil worn by Saudi women. In this large, extended family, there were over 50 children; Osama bin Laden was born somewhere in the later half of the group. In 1968, when Osama was about ten years old, his father died in a plane crash. Osama bin Laden came into a sizable fortune at that time from his father's holdings in the family business; estimates of his inheritance range from about \$50 million to about \$300 million. His mother has since remarried.

——— “ ———

Both before and after his father's death, Osama bin Laden grew up in an environment of wealth and privilege. He and his brothers were the playmates of the most prominent families, including the royal princes of Saudi Arabia, and they grew up surrounded by nannies, tutors, and butlers. Many family members traveled to Europe and the United States for school and vacations.

——— ” ———

Both before and after his father's death, Osama bin Laden grew up in an environment of wealth and privilege. He and his brothers were the playmates of the most prominent families, including the royal princes of Saudi Arabia, and they grew up surrounded by nannies, tutors, and butlers. Many family members traveled to Europe and the United States for school and vacations. Yet the family also had a more pious side. They belonged to the Wahhabi sect of Sunni Muslims, the dominant religious group in Saudi Arabia. The Wahhabi sect is considered a more traditional and conservative branch of Islam. (For more information on Islam, please see sidebar on page 12.)



Islam and Saudi Arabia

Islam is the name of a religion practiced around the world; its believers are called Muslims. There are over one billion Muslims worldwide, and only about one-fifth of that group are Arabs. There are large groups of practicing Muslims in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, eastern Europe, and the United States, which is home to about five to ten million Muslims. Even though many non-Arabs practice Islam, Arabic is the language primarily used in prayer and in the study of Islam. That's because Arabic is the language of Islam's holy book, the Koran (also spelled Qur'an).

The Prophet Muhammad

Islam was founded by the prophet Muhammad in the seventh century in what is now Saudi Arabia. He received a series of revelations from Allah (God) that are collected in the Koran, which is considered the word of God. In addition, the sayings and deeds of Muhammad are recorded in another text called the Sunna. The main message of the revelations is that there is one God, not many gods, a common belief at that time. Thus, Islam is considered, along with Judaism and Christianity, to be one of the three prominent "monotheistic" religions. Muslims also believe that Muhammad was the last in a succession of prophets, including those from the Jewish and Christian traditions, who proclaimed that there is only one

God. Thus Muslims believe that Islam is the same religion that God revealed to the prophets Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Because of this, many Muslims see their faith as related to Judaism and Christianity.

The Five Pillars and Other Beliefs

There are five basic requirements, or pillars, of Islam. The first is *iman*, the profession of faith, the basic creed: There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah. The other pillars are *salat*, the five daily prayers; *sawm*, fasting during Ramadan (the month in the Muslim calendar when the Koran was revealed to Muhammad); *zakat*, charitable contributions; and *hajj*, pilgrimage to Mecca. All Muslims are expected to make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetimes. Saudi Arabia is a place of special importance to Muslims as the birthplace of Islam. It is considered holy land because it is home to Mecca, where Muhammad was born, and to Medina, where he migrated and became the spiritual head of a new community.

Other beliefs are central to the Muslim faith. A few of these beliefs are that humans are given both freedom and responsibility; that the soul is immortal; that a day of judgment is coming; and that there is a heaven and hell. Another important element of Islam is *jihad*, which is often translated as holy war. *Jihad* means struggle, but it can have a variety of meanings. It can mean striving or struggling toward God, meaning that Muslims should struggle within themselves to do the will of God. But it can also mean struggle in the defense of Islam—holy war—meaning that Muslims should be prepared to struggle to defend Islam when the community is attacked. Yet many experts emphasize that this meaning refers to acts of defense, not acts of aggression.

Islamic History

Islam has had a long history. In its early years, Islam spread rapidly through the Middle East, North Africa, and into Europe. Thus it came into conflict with the Christian nations of Europe, which refused to abandon their faith and relinquish their power. This began centuries of armed conflict pitting Christian armies against Muslim forces. These conflicts included a series of “Crusades,” in which European forces clashed with Muslim armies in the holy land of Jerusalem, in what is now Israel. Jerusalem and its surrounding area is sacred to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. For centuries, control of the region has been hotly contested and has prompted war and unrest.

Many Muslims are keenly aware of this history. For example, they look back to the Crusades and glorify the exploits of Saladin (also spelled Salah al-Din), a Muslim warrior and military hero from the 12th century who fought against the Christian Crusaders and retook Jerusalem. Muslims also celebrate the Ottoman Empire, an Islamic territory that began in the year 1290. At its height, it stretched from North Africa to eastern Europe to the Middle East to parts of Russia. Throughout this time, all Islamic territory was ruled over and unified by the Muslim caliph, who was the religious authority believed by many Muslims to be the direct successor to Mohammad. In 1918, with World War I, the Ottoman Empire was defeated and dismantled. That ended the rule of the Muslim caliph. While all these events happened in the distant past, for some Muslims this is still very relevant. For example, bin Laden referred to the fall of the Ottoman Empire just recently by saying that the Islamic world "has been tasting humiliation and degradation for more than 80 years." Thus Islamic history—its triumphs as well as its defeats—still greatly influences many modern Muslims.

Tolerance and Violence

Islam has always tolerated diverse opinions; Mohammad said "Difference of opinion in my community is a manifestation of divine mercy." Islamic leaders interpret the Koran and the Sunna to determine Islamic law. But those interpretations can vary, and Muslim communities often mix social or tribal customs with their religious beliefs. For example, under Islamic law, women have the right to own property and to receive an education. Both women and men are required to dress modestly. The oppressed position of women in many Islamic societies is due more to the cultural traditions of those societies than to the teachings of their faith. But throughout the religion of Islam, experts say, violence is condemned unless it is morally justified. Even then, acts of violence in self-defense are accepted, but not acts of aggression. The taking of innocent life is strictly forbidden, even in war. Instead, Islam is concerned with finding peace and reconciliation with Allah, a just and compassionate God.

For More Information

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/islam>
<http://www.cbsnews.com/htdocs/religion/islam/framesource.html>
<http://islam.about.com/mbody.htm>
<http://www.bigchalk.com/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOPortal.woa/11/wa/HWCDA/sections?sid=535&tg=RELIGI&flt=GA>
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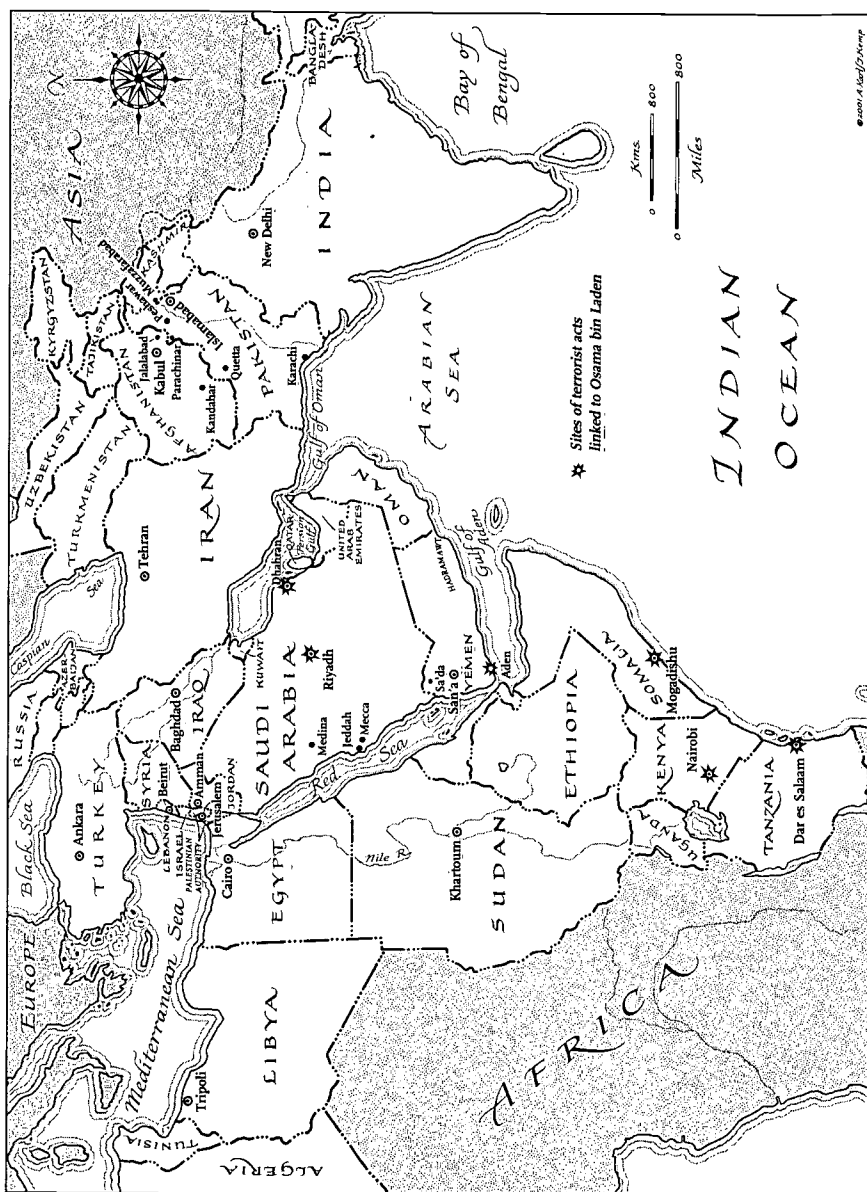
A bin Laden family photo, from a family vacation in Sweden in 1971. Osama bin Laden is second from the right in the photo above, and also shown in close up in the photo at right.



EDUCATION

Much of bin Laden's early life featured a mix of influences from both conservative Islamic tradition and Western culture. In Jeddah and Mecca, he attended religious classes, but he also attended a private school where he learned English and wore American-style pants and shirts. He finished secondary school there in about 1973. Travel was also part of the mix. On a family trip to Sweden, family photos show Osama wearing bell-bottom flares. While he was a teenager, he would often fly to Beirut, Lebanon. At that time, before the civil war in Lebanon, Beirut was known for its night life. According to the newspaper the *Mideast Mirror*, "Osama bin Laden was a frequent visitor to Beirut, where he made a name as a free-spending, fun-loving [youth] in flashy nightclubs and bars. . . . Bin Laden was then a heavy drinker who often ended up embroiled in shouting matches and fistfights with other young men over an attractive barmaid or nightclub dancer. His Beirut escapades were interrupted by the 1975 outbreak of Lebanon's civil war, however."

For college, bin Laden attended King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. There he studied civil engineering, management, economics,



The map above covers a section of Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. The asterisks mark the locations of terrorist acts in the region that have been linked to Osama bin Laden: Aden, Yemen (1992); Mogadishu, Somalia (1993); Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (1995); Dhahran, Saudi Arabia (1996); Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (1998); and Aden, Yemen (2000). These terrorist acts are discussed in further detail on pages 25 - 28.

and business, and he also became interested in Islamic studies. He listened to lectures by Abdullah Assam, a Palestinian who was a spiritual leader in the radical group Muslim Brotherhood. In Assam's lectures, which included a mix of Islamic fundamentalism and violent rhetoric, bin Laden heard an aggressive version of Islamic history: the exploits of Saladin, the 12th-century Muslim military hero; the disintegration of the Islamic Ottoman Empire after World War I; and the affront to Arabs when Israel was created after World War II and gained control of Palestine. In his lectures, Assam's core message was that Islam needed to unite and wage *jihad*, or holy war, to free itself from the evil influences of the West. These lectures are considered one of the key reasons that bin Laden developed a militant religious commitment. Bin Laden graduated from King Abdul Aziz University in about 1979, fueled with this view of Islam.

When he finished college, bin Laden remained in Saudi Arabia. With his background in business and engineering, he surely would have been an asset to the family business. But he soon reached a turning point, as several historical events intervened and influenced the direction he chose in life.

TURNING POINT — THE SOVIETS INVADE AFGHANISTAN

In December 1979, soon after bin Laden finished school, an event occurred that had a tremendous influence on him and on other Muslims. That's when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, a poor, primitive Muslim country in south central Asia with a very harsh terrain of mountains and deserts. It's a land filled with warring ethnic groups and ancient tribal rivalries. The 1979 invasion by the Soviet Union was considered an unprovoked attack by a superpower on a small peasant nation. Almost immediately, this became a pivotal issue in the Islamic world. The attack was considered a violation of Muslim territory and an offense against Allah. Many Muslims felt enraged that Communist atheists had invaded a Muslim country, and they wanted to defend their fellow Muslims against the infidels.

Soon, the United States also became involved in the war in Afghanistan. This was during the Cold War, a time of great tension and hostility between the Soviet Union (and its allies) and the United States (and its allies). The U.S. became concerned about several issues, including Soviet aggression into an independent nation and the possible spread of Communism. So the U.S. began providing arms and other supplies to the Afghan forces fighting for their freedom. These freedom fighters from the Afghan resistance were called *mujahadeen*.

BECOMING A FREEDOM FIGHTER IN AFGHANISTAN

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan became a turning point for bin Laden. In response to the invasion, Muslim leaders put out a call for *jihād*, or holy war. Bin Laden was one of many Muslims who traveled to Afghanistan to answer the call. Years later, he told an interviewer, "When the invasion of Afghanistan started, I was enraged, and I went there at once. I arrived within days, before the end of 1979." Many observers have said that with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, bin Laden developed a new sense of direction and purpose and further developed his militant religious commitment.

———— “ ————

Bin Laden became one of many Muslims who traveled to Afghanistan to answer the call for jihād. Years later, he told an interviewer, "When the invasion of Afghanistan started, I was enraged, and I went there at once. I arrived within days, before the end of 1979."

At first, bin Laden traveled to the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. But because of his family background, he could help out by raising money for the war effort. So he returned to Saudi Arabia to raise funds from several sources: the royal family, other wealthy Saudis, and business leaders, including his own family. By the mid-1980s he was living in Peshawar, Pakistan, on the Afghan border. There, he provided help with financing, organizing, and engineering to the *mujahadeen*, or Afghan freedom fighters. He brought in bulldozers and other heavy construction equipment and began building roads, caves, defensive tunnels, and other necessities. He also provided humanitarian assistance. According

———— ” ————

to a report from the U.S. State Department, which supported the *mujahadeen* throughout the Soviet conflict, "bin Laden imported bulldozers and other heavy equipment to cut roads, tunnels, hospitals, and storage depots through Afghanistan's mountainous terrain to move and shelter fighters and supplies."

Bin Laden also joined up with Abdullah Assam, the Palestinian whose radical lectures had fueled his growing militancy while he was a student at King Abdul Aziz University. Bin Laden and Assam created Maktab-al-Khidamat (MAK), also known as the Services Office. MAK began recruiting fighters from other countries to help the Afghan *mujahadeen*. "The MAK ultimately established recruitment centers around the world—including in the United States, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan—that enlisted, sheltered, and transported thousands of individuals from over 50

Glossary of Related Terms

fatwa — A fatwa is a religious decree or pronouncement, usually issued by a recognized Islamic religious leader. Although bin Laden isn't trained as a religious leader, he has issued fatwas that have been influential among militant Muslims.

Islam — Islam is the name of a religion practiced around the world; its believers are called *Muslims*.

Koran — The Koran is Islam's holy book. It is also spelled Qur'an. It is the record of the revelations from Allah (God) that Muhammad received, and it is considered the word of God.

jihad — Jihad is often translated as holy war. It means struggle, but it can have a variety of meanings. It can mean striving or struggling toward God, meaning that Muslims should struggle within themselves to do the will of God. But it can also mean struggle in the defense of Islam—holy war—meaning that Muslims should be prepared to struggle to defend Islam when the community is attacked. Yet many experts emphasize that this meaning refers to acts of defense, but not acts of aggression.

Mecca and *Medina* — Two places in Saudi Arabia that are considered holy to Muslims. Mecca is where Muhammad was born, and Medina is where he migrated and became the spiritual head of a new community.

Muhammad — Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah, or God.

mujahadeen — Mujahadeen are freedom fighters from the Afghan resistance.

Palestinians — Palestinians are Arabs whose ancestors have lived in Palestine for thousands of years. The area of Palestine, which includes the holy city of Jerusalem, is not a separate country; instead, it is primarily part of modern-day Israel. The area is sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

countries to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets. It has organized and funded paramilitary training camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan," said one CIA fact sheet. The fighters recruited by this group became known as Afghan Arabs. They primarily came from Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and others. Sources estimate that 25,000 to 50,000 fighters were recruited in this way. In addition to recruiting fighters and providing their housing and training, MAK also funneled millions of dollars to the war effort. That probably included money from the United States, which was still supporting the Afghan fighters against the Soviets.

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"Bin Laden's organization is very different from the groups that carried out bombings and hijackings in the past. [Al Qaeda] is not tightly knit with a clear command structure. It is a loose coalition of groups operating across continents."

— Roger Hardy, *BBC News*

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respect of other fighters. His willingness to reject the easy life and to fight in the war, even though he was wealthy, revealed his commitment to the cause. He became renowned as a fighter and a hero throughout much of the Arab world.

By 1989, Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan in defeat. The Afghan Arabs dispersed, returning to their home countries and often spreading unrest throughout the region. Bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia as a hero, celebrated for his service to Islam. He began working for the family construction firm, the Binladen Group. But he quickly became disturbed by what he saw as government corruption and Western influences in Saudi Arabian society, and he began to criticize the kingdom's royal family. Soon bin Laden reached another turning point, as historical events intervened to influence his choice of direction once again.

CREATING AL QAEDA

Bin Laden also set up his own training camp in Afghanistan for the Afghan Arabs. That camp eventually became known as The Base, or Al Qaeda in Arabic (also spelled Al Qaida and pronounced al kay-duh). "The camps became virtual universities for future Islamic radicalism," said journalist Ahmed Rashid. Al Qaeda is the group that evolved into bin Laden's current terrorist organization. In the late 1980s bin Laden also personally took part in one or more battles in Afghanistan, fighting against the Soviets. His direct participation in the war—fighting in battles and living in primitive conditions, often in caves—earned him the

TURNING POINT — THE U.S. AND THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

In 1990-1991, a series of events occurred that had a tremendous effect on bin Laden. That's when the United States became involved in the Persian Gulf War. In August 1990, Saddam Hussein, the leader of Iraq, invaded Kuwait, a tiny nation on its southern border. Kuwait is also on the border of Saudi Arabia, on the Persian Gulf. The invasion was conducted by about 140,000 Iraqi troops. The world community considered it an act of outright aggression against a sovereign nation, and it immediately provoked an international crisis.

That crisis was caused, in part, because Kuwait produces oil that is exported to Western nations and because international leaders were determined to stop Saddam Hussein from exerting control over the Persian Gulf, a crucial route for shipping oil from the Middle East. There was also concern about preventing a potential Iraqi attack on Saudi Arabia, another important source of oil for the West.

The United Nations passed a series of resolutions that condemned the Iraqi actions and set a deadline of January 1991 for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. At the same time, U.S. leaders traveled to Saudi Arabia to secure permission to station U.S. forces there. The U.S. set up a base in Saudi Arabia from which to mount military operations against Iraq. Soon 500,000 American troops were stationed there, and they were joined by troops from other allied nations in Europe and the Middle East. This early phase of military buildup was called Operation Desert Shield.

Saddam Hussein failed to respond to the January 1991 deadline, which precipitated the next phase of conflict, Operation Desert Storm. This was a United Nations offensive led by U.S. troops. Initially there was an air offensive that included attacks on Iraqi forces in Kuwait and in Iraq. That was followed by a ground war, during which the Iraqi forces suffered heavy losses and retreated. The war ended with a cease fire on April 6, 1991. After that, the U.S. maintained a permanent military presence in Saudi Arabia.



Bin Laden in a photo supplied to a newspaper on November 10, 2001.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE U.S.

The events of 1990-1991 marked a turning point for bin Laden. In fact, the effects of that war on bin Laden were profound. He was enraged that American infidels (unbelievers) were stationed in Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam. His rage toward Americans has continued to grow ever since.

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“I believe that sooner or later the Americans will leave Saudi Arabia, and that the war declared by America against the Saudi people means war against Muslims everywhere. Resistance against America will spread in many, many places in Muslim countries. Our trusted [religious] leaders, the ulema, have given us a fatwa that we must drive out the Americans. The solution to this crisis is the withdrawal of American troops. . . . Their military presence is an insult to the Saudi people.”
 — Osama bin Laden

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Laden later said. “Resistance against America will spread in many, many places in Muslim countries. Our trusted [religious] leaders, the *ulema*, have given us a *fatwa* [religious decree] that we must drive out the Americans. The solution to this crisis is the withdrawal of American troops. . . . Their military presence is an insult to the Saudi people.”

The presence of Americans in Saudi Arabia also contributed to his growing militant religious commitment. He and many other Muslims felt that the presence of Americans was a betrayal and a desecration of the Muslim holy places. “Allah has ordered us to glorify the truth and to defend Muslim land, especially the Arab peninsula, against the unbelievers,” bin Laden later said in an interview. He considered the presence of foreign troops in the birthplace of Islam to be the greatest act of aggression in Islam’s 1400-year history. “Now infidels walk everywhere on the land where Muhammad was born and where the Koran was revealed to him,” he also said.

At first, bin Laden spoke to the Saudi Arabian royal family and offered to help build an army to defend the nation against outside aggression. When that effort was rejected, he began to speak out publicly against the Americans and against the Saudi leadership for allowing the Americans to remain. “I believe that sooner or later the Americans will leave Saudi Arabia, and that the war declared by America against the Saudi people means war against Muslims everywhere,” bin

Palestine and Israel



The area of Palestine, which includes the holy city of Jerusalem, is not a separate country; instead, it is primarily part of modern-day Israel. The Palestinians are Arabs whose ancestors have lived in Palestine for thousands of years. During much of that time, Jews have lived there as well. This area of modern Israel contains land that is sacred to three of the world's major religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Each group claims to be the rightful heir to this land.

In the late 1800s, many Jewish people from Europe immigrated to the area of Palestine. They immigrated to escape from prejudice and anti-Semitism in Europe. They were Zionists—people of the Jewish faith who believed that a separate nation for Jews should be established in Palestine. In the 1920s, the hostility between the Jews and the Arabs reached the point of armed conflict. England was given the job of governing Palestine and trying to keep the peace among the warring factions. By the 1940s, the British met with armed resistance from both Arab and Jewish groups.

The situation worsened when many Jews immigrated to the region after World War II. After the horrors of the Holocaust, when Nazis systematically murdered some six million Jews, the Zionist cause was widely embraced by Jewish people. They wanted to establish a land of their own where they would be safe from persecution. In 1947, the United Nations created the nation of Israel by dividing Palestine into two separate nations: one for Jews (Israel), and one for Arabs.

The Arab world soon declared war on the new Jewish nation. But in 1948-49, Israel fought and won what it calls its War of Independence against Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. Israel absorbed much of the land that was intended to become the Arab nation in Palestine, and Egypt and Jordan took the rest. There was no land left to create an Arab nation in Palestine. Thus by the end of the war, about one million Arab Palestinians were forced from their land and became exiles. Many lived in refugee camps in neighboring Arab countries. This situation has fueled an ongoing state of conflict in the region. It has affected not only the Israelis and the Palestinians, but also the Arab nations of the Mideast and ultimately the rest of the world.

Another important issue for bin Laden was the U.S. support of Israel. He especially wanted to prevent the U.S. from using Saudi Arabia as a base for protecting Israel. He and many other Muslims have viewed Israel as their enemy because of the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, many of whom are Muslims. (For more information, please see sidebar on page 23.) Bin Laden hated the Americans for supporting Israel and rejecting the Palestinian cause. To him, it meant that the Americans were trying to oppress and victimize Muslims and to eliminate Islam. This issue has affected him deeply. Many Muslims, in addition to bin Laden, have been critical of American policies in the Middle East. Some have felt that the U.S. supports Israel and ignores injustices done to Palestinians. Writing in the British newspaper the *Sunday Herald*, Neil Mackay summarized this view: "Many Arabs in the Middle East cannot understand the unstinting support which is granted to Israel. . . . In their judgment, by backing Israel's policy of colonization in Palestinian territory, the U.S. has engaged in a hostile act which fully justifies the antagonism and the violence." The United States, however, would challenge this view, for it considers Israel one of its closest allies and continues to support the Jewish nation.

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“We declared jihad against the U.S. government because the U.S. government is unjust, criminal, and tyrannical. It has committed acts that are extremely unjust, hideous, and criminal, whether directly or through its support of the Israel occupation of [Palestine].”

— Osama bin Laden

affected him deeply. Many Muslims, in addition to bin Laden, have been critical of American policies in the Middle East. Some have felt that the U.S. supports Israel and ignores injustices done to Palestinians. Writing in the British newspaper the *Sunday Herald*, Neil Mackay summarized this view: "Many Arabs in the Middle East cannot understand the unstinting support which is granted to Israel. . . . In their judgment, by backing Israel's policy of colonization in Palestinian territory, the U.S. has engaged in a hostile act which fully justifies the antagonism and the violence." The United States, however, would challenge this view, for it considers Israel one of its closest allies and continues to support the Jewish nation.

MOVING TO SUDAN

In 1991, bin Laden was expelled by the government of Saudi Arabia because of his criticism of the Saudi royal family; they revoked his citizenship three years later. He returned to Afghanistan, but soon moved to Sudan, which is directly south of Egypt in northeastern Africa. Sudan had recently installed an Islamic government and encouraged all Muslims to move there—in fact, the impoverished nation had become known for hosting militant extremists. Although his financial status is unclear, bin Laden probably had at that time tens of millions of dollars, if not hundreds of millions, from his inheritance from his father. And he soon put that money to work.

In Sudan, bin Laden began to set up legitimate businesses. These included a tannery, two large farms, and a road construction company. Many believe

these businesses funneled money to various terrorist groups. In addition, bin Laden also set up Al Qaeda training camps. He paid for about 500 *mu-jahadeen*, or Afghan Arabs, to travel to his camps in Sudan from Pakistan, where they were still living. Soon more Afghan Arabs and other Muslim extremists came to Sudan to join his terrorist operation.

Since then, there has been a series of terrorist attacks on American interests, which many analysts believe are linked to bin Laden and his followers in Al Qaeda. On December 29, 1992, a bomb exploded in a hotel in Aden, Yemen. U.S. troops who had been staying there but had already left were presumed to be the target. Instead, two tourists from Austria were killed. That attack became the first in what is believed to be a series of terrorist attacks on American interests by bin Laden's followers. On February 26, 1993, a car bomb was detonated in the underground parking garage of the World Trade Center in New York City. The building shook as if it was hit by an earthquake. The bomb destroyed walls and floors, started fires, and trapped tens of thousands of people in a chaotic abyss of smoke and darkness. Six people were killed and about 1,000 were injured. On October 3 and 4, 1993, U.S. troops were attacked in Mogadishu, Somalia, where they were stationed on a United Nations mission to provide humanitarian aid and fight famine. Somali forces killed 18 U.S. soldiers. Journalists there photographed and videotaped a series of chilling images, including the interrogation of a wounded soldier and the body of another soldier being dragged through the streets. On November 13, 1995, five Americans and two Indians were killed in a truck bombing at a Saudi National Guard facility in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. In May 1996, the government of Sudan, after being pressured by the United States and Saudi Arabia, expelled bin Laden. But shortly after that, another attack occurred. On June 25, 1996, a large truck bomb destroyed a military barracks and apartment complex for U.S. personnel called Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. There were 19 U.S. soldiers killed in that attack, and 500 people were injured.

Terrorism is the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.
— FBI Definition



*The USS Cole after it was damaged by a terrorist attack,
with U.S. sailors on deck, October 2000.*

RETURNING TO AFGHANISTAN

Expelled from Sudan in 1996, bin Laden and his followers moved to Afghanistan, at a time when that country was in a state of turmoil. The Soviet Union had installed a Communist government before leaving the country in 1989. That Communist government was overthrown in 1992, creating a chaotic situation in which various factions fought for control. One faction was the Taliban (also spelled Taleban), a fundamentalist Islamic militia originally made up of students. When bin Laden arrived in Afghanistan in 1996, the Taliban was in the process of taking over much of the country. They quickly imposed a strict interpretation of Islamic law. In particular, the Taliban imposed extremely harsh and repressive restrictions on women: they had to be completely covered in public in a burqa, they could only go out accompanied by a man, they couldn't attend school, they couldn't work, and they often couldn't get medical care. Basically, women had no rights. For both men and women, punishment for breaking the Taliban's rules was very severe, including amputations and death. Most of the international community refused to recognize the Taliban regime.

In Afghanistan, bin Laden and his followers took up residence in a vast network of tunnels and caves. From there, he continued his involvement in terrorist activities. On February 23, 1998, he issued a *fatwa*, or religious decree or pronouncement: "The ruling to kill Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who is able, in any country where this is possible, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque [in Jerusalem] and the holy mosque [in Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim. We—with God's help—call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it." A *fatwa* is usually issued by a recognized Islamic religious leader. Although bin Laden isn't trained as a religious leader, his decree was expected to be influential among militant Muslims.

Throughout the late 1990s bin Laden repeatedly issued such threats to the United States and others. Then on August 7, 1998, in a coordinated terrorist attack, truck bombs exploded just minutes apart outside two U.S. embassies, one in Nairobi, Kenya, and one in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. These massive explosions killed 224 people, including 12 Americans, and injured about 5,000 people. Most of the people killed and injured in the attacks were Africans. That attack occurred eight years to the day after U.S. forces arrived in Saudi Arabia for the Gulf War. Then on October 12, 2000, the *USS Cole* was bombed during a refueling stop in the harbor of Aden, Yemen. A suicide bomber blew a huge 40 by 40 foot hole into the side of

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"The ruling to kill Americans and their allies — civilians and military — is an individual duty for every Muslim who is able, in any country where this is possible, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque (in Jerusalem) and the holy mosque (in Mecca), from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim. We — with God's help — call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it." — Osama bin Laden, Feb. 23, 1998

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A plane approaches the World Trade Center moments before it struck the tower at left, September 11, 2001.

the ship, killing 17 U.S. sailors. During the late 1990s, the United States judicial system prepared a series of indictments that detailed bin Laden's alleged involvement in all of these terrorist activities. In 1999, the FBI placed bin Laden on its list of the Ten Most Wanted Fugitives.

During the 1990s, while bin Laden was first in Sudan and then in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda began to unite with other Islamic militant groups. He created a loosely affiliated network of radical groups that would coordinate terrorist attacks. He brought followers from other groups to his base for training in terrorist tactics, and then sent them out into the world. He also sent his trainers out to work with other groups. U.S. intelligence officials believe that Al Qaeda camps trained thousands of fighters. Those fighters now form an international organization of terrorists.

SEPTEMBER 11

Thus by 2001, a series of terrorist events had occurred that many experts have linked to bin Laden: the 1992 bombing of a hotel in Aden, Yemen; the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York; the 1993 killing of U.S. troops in Mogadishu, Somalia; the 1995 bombing of U.S. troops and others in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; the 1996 truck bomb at a U.S. military bar-

racks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia; the 1998 explosions at U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; and the 2000 suicide bombing of the *USS Cole* in the harbor in Aden, Yemen.

Bin Laden's worst attack against the U.S. came on September 11, 2001. On that horrifying day, a series of terrorist attacks occurred in the United States. At 8:45 a.m., a passenger airplane, American Airlines Flight #11, crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center, a complex of buildings that included two towers that were the tallest buildings in New York City. At first, many people thought it was just a terrible accident. Then at 9:03 a.m., United Airlines Flight #175 crashed into the south tower. At that moment, observers assumed that the planes had been hijacked and that the United States had been attacked by terrorists.

Then at 9:40 a.m., the crisis also struck Washington, D.C., when American Airlines Flight #77 crashed into the Pentagon. There are 24,000 people who work at the Pentagon, the huge five-sided building that is the headquarters of the U.S. military. At that point, no one knew how many airplanes had been hijacked or how many attacks would occur. Fearing additional attacks, security personnel evacuated the White House and the U.S. Capitol building, to ensure that government staffers would be safe and would be able to continue running the government despite the crisis. Then in New York, the south tower of the World Trade Center collapsed at 9:50 a.m., and the north tower followed at 10:29 a.m. In addition, another plane was hijacked, United Flight #93, and it crashed in western Pennsylvania at 10:00 a.m. In less than two hours, four planes had crashed, the two tallest buildings in New York City had been reduced to rubble, and the headquarters of the U.S. military had been attacked.

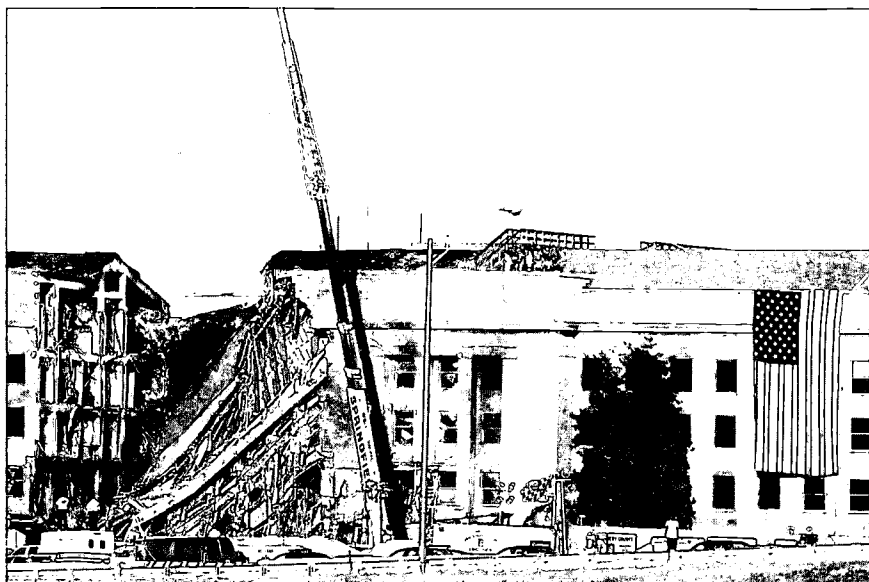
Amidst all the trauma, there were many incredible scenes of heroism, sacrifice, dedication, and courage. In New York City, response at the scene was swift, as firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians, and others raced to the World Trade Center to help. These brave emergency workers, especially the city's firefighters, hurried into the burning buildings

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“Islam has been hijacked by a discourse of anger and a rhetoric of rage. There is nothing Islamic about terrorism. To use violence against civilians to create terror is one of the greatest crimes of Islam.”

— Hamza Yusef,
Islamic Scholar

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The area of the Pentagon damaged by the attack on September 11, 2001. In a show of patriotism and defiance, firefighters and rescue workers undraped a large U.S. flag near the damaged area.

with no hesitation or thought of the terrible risks they faced. All the city—and the nation—responded with deep gratitude for their sacrifice. On United Flight #93, which crashed in Pennsylvania, some of the passengers made phone calls from the plane after the hijacking occurred. They learned about the other hijacked planes and the terrorist attacks. These passengers became determined to prevent the terrorists on their plane from accomplishing their mission. The plane had been traveling west, then it turned around and began heading back east again. Many believe that the hijackers planned to crash in Washington, D.C., either into the White House or the U.S. Capitol building. But the passengers banded together and fought against the terrorists. The plane crashed in an empty field, thanks to the heroism of those passengers who had the courage to fight back.

THE AFTERMATH

In the aftermath of the attacks, the immediate concerns, of course, were to search for and rescue victims, to safeguard the stability and continuity of the U.S. government, to prevent any additional hijackings, and to protect any other facilities that might be vulnerable to attack. Firefighters and

other emergency personnel were already at work at both the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, searching for victims. All flights around the U.S. were suspended to prevent further crises. Security was beefed up at locations like dams, military facilities, and nuclear power plants. President George W. Bush was safely out of town, visiting a school in Florida. He spent part of the day flying from one location to the next on the presidential airplane, Air Force One, to ensure that he would be safe from terrorists. Other key personnel of the federal government were quickly hustled into secure locations to ensure that an orderly government of the United States could continue to function no matter what happened.

The aftermath in New York City was horrifying. A huge section of lower Manhattan was engulfed in smoke, soot, and debris. Thousands of people were forced to flee on foot through terrible conditions, many agonizing about the safety of their loved ones. It left many people, both adults and children, feeling frightened, insecure, anxious, angry, and sad. It was especially difficult for children in New York, who were close to the traumatic scene. It's hard to overestimate the sense of devastation that many New Yorkers felt after their beloved city was attacked. The collapse of the towers left a gaping hole in the skyline and a bottomless hole in people's hearts. And there were also gaping holes in many families, in New York and elsewhere: the families of people who worked in the towers, the families of the emergency personnel killed in the line of duty, the families of the Pentagon staffers who died in the line of fire, as well as the families of the hijacked passengers and crews on the four planes.

The mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani, helped to coordinate the relief efforts there, and his words were an inspiration to all. "The tragedy that we're all undergoing right now is something that we have had nightmares about but probably thought wouldn't happen. My heart goes out to all of

VICTIMS OF SEPTEMBER 11

2,673	World Trade Center, New York
92	American Airlines Flight 11
65	United Airlines Flight 175
<hr/>	
2,830	In New York
125	Pentagon, Washington, D.C.
64	American Airlines Flight 77
<hr/>	
189	In Washington, D.C.
44	United Airlines Flight 93
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44	In Pennsylvania
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3,063	Victims of September 11*

* Total does not include the 19 terrorists.

Source: Associated Press (AP), Mar. 6, 2002

the innocent victims of this horrible and vicious act of terrorism. Our focus now has to be on saving as many lives as possible. We have hundreds of police officers and firefighters who are engaging in rescue efforts in lower Manhattan. . . . [We're doing everything] that can possibly be done in the face of this barbaric act to make the city secure. We will strive now very hard to save as many people as possible and to send a message that the city of New York and the United States of America [are] much stronger than any group of barbaric terrorists — that our democracy, that our rule of law, that our strength and our willingness to defend ourselves will ultimately prevail."

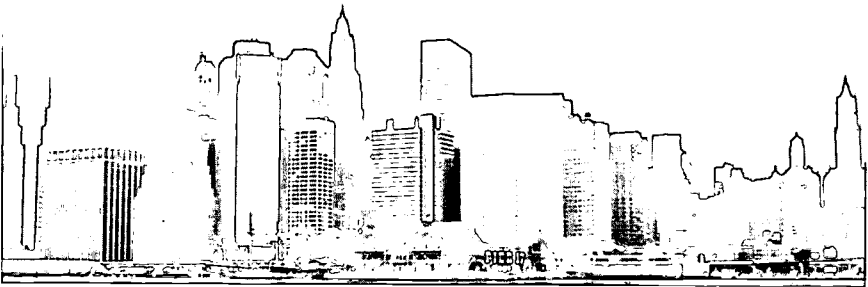
People around the country were stunned and grieving. But still, they banded together to help in any way possible, through blood drives, financial donations, and contributions of other goods and services. Kids all over the country worked together to contribute to the relief efforts, too. Indeed, as one positive result of these terrible attacks, many Americans felt a renewed sense of patriotism, pride, and national unity, as people rallied to support the President. People around the world also responded with shock, outrage, sympathy, and a global display of unity. Foreign leaders, including those from Arab nations, condemned the vicious attacks and offered their condolences to the United States. They also pledged to help the U.S. fight terrorism. Muslim religious leaders quickly emphasized that their religion rejects aggression and that the attacks contradict the teachings of the Koran. President Bush also stressed that Islam is a religion of peace and cautioned Americans not to blame all Muslims.

Within hours of the attack, federal officials and the nation's intelligence sources concluded that bin Laden and his terrorist network Al Qaeda were involved in the attacks and that the hijackers were acting under his direction. On September 20, President Bush gave a speech before Congress in which he described a global war on terrorism. The full U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate joined together in cheering his comments. President Bush articulated the nation's sorrow and anger, reassured the American people about the nation's safety, promised that the U.S. would punish the terrorist forces, and described the state of the country. "We have seen the state of our union in the endurance of rescuers, working past exhaustion," President Bush said. "We have seen the unfurling of flags, the lighting of candles, the giving of blood, the saying of prayers — in English, Hebrew, and Arabic. We have seen the decency of a loving and giving people, who have made the grief of strangers their own. My fellow citizens, for the last nine days, the entire world has seen for itself the state of our union — and it is strong. Tonight we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned

August 14, 2000



September 12, 2001



The skyline of lower Manhattan, with and without the World Trade Center towers, as seen from Brooklyn.

to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done. . . . I will not forget this wound to our country or those who inflicted it. I will not yield, I will not relent in waging this struggle for the freedom and security of the American people."

RESPONDING TO THE ATTACKS

In his speech, President Bush said that "Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: either you are with us or you are with the terrorists." He also said that "from this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime." This ultimatum was referring to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and to bin Laden. President Bush was threatening that the U.S. would retaliate against both bin Laden and against Afghanistan, where he was hiding.

On October 7, 2001, the United States began military strikes against Afghanistan, in alliance with Afghan forces who were opposed to the Taliban. The war began with air strikes against Afghan military targets, although some civilian targets were accidentally hit also. By November 13, the Taliban

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“We have seen the state of our union in the endurance of rescuers, working past exhaustion,” President Bush told the country in a televised speech on September 20, 2001. “We have seen the unfurling of flags, the lighting of candles, the giving of blood, the saying of prayers — in English, Hebrew, and Arabic. We have seen the decency of a loving and giving people, who have made the grief of strangers their own. My fellow citizens, for the last nine days, the entire world has seen for itself the state of our union — and it is strong.”

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had fled from Kabul, the capital city, and by December 7, the Taliban had left the southern city of Kandahar. On December 22, the Taliban was officially ousted from power and a new interim leader, Hamid Karzai, was sworn in as Prime Minister. He will lead a government made up of representatives from Afghanistan’s various factions. By early March, the ground fighting had intensified, as American troops engaged in sporadic but fierce battles with isolated groups of Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters. As of this writing, the battles are ongoing. At the same time, American troops were dispatched to the Philippines, where the Americans will train local forces to fight terrorism. Similar missions are being considered to other nations, including Yemen, Indonesia, and the former Soviet republic of Georgia, to cooperate in the fight against the common enemy of terrorism.

Also during Fall 2001, President Bush created a federal department of Homeland Security to address issues related to national security within the U.S. One of its first steps was to increase security at airports and on planes. Later that Fall, terrorism touched the U.S. again with an anthrax scare.

Anthrax is an acute infectious disease caused by bacteria. Some forms of the disease are fatal. This biochemical poison was put into envelopes and mailed to political leaders and to several media companies, including magazines, newspapers, and TV networks. There were many people exposed to the disease, and five people died as a result. Authorities have not yet identified the perpetrators, and it is unclear



Firefighters at Ground Zero, the site of the World Trade Center in New York, on September 11, 2001.

whether those attacks were linked to bin Laden or Al Qaeda. Despite the dangers, most Americans have gotten on with their lives with courage and conviction, determined not to let the heightened sense of danger prevent them from living.

Since September 11 two videos of bin Laden have surfaced. In them he talks about the events of that day, gloats about the destruction, taunts the

U.S., and takes responsibility for the attacks. In the more recent video he appears tired and gaunt, fueling speculation that he is seriously ill. As of March 2002, bin Laden's whereabouts remain unknown. He may still be hiding in a cave in Afghanistan, he may have fled the country, or he may have been killed in a bombing raid. At this point, U.S. officials assume that he is alive and carry on the search for him in their quest to bring him to justice. Currently, the hunt for bin Laden continues.

At this point, it's impossible to predict what will happen in the search for bin Laden, in the war in Afghanistan, or in the larger war against terrorism. One senior U.S. intelligence agent from the FBI identified five tools to combat terrorism: diplomacy, military action, covert operations, economic sanctions, and law enforcement. The U.S. is currently using all of those tools in the fight against terrorism. Many have said that bin Laden is just one part of a larger problem between Western society and militant Muslims. The Al Qaeda network can continue without his leadership, they say. Even if bin Laden is found and stopped, others will rise up to take his place. Many observers believe that any permanent solution must include dialogue and diplomacy, with people from all sides discussing issues and resolving their differences with mutual respect. Clearly, military action will be only one piece in the larger effort to stop bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Bin Laden is believed to have four wives and at least 15 children. There are conflicting reports about the location of his family; some say that his wives and children have been moved to a safe location, while others say that they are staying with him currently as he moves from place to place, trying to evade capture.

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Time, Sep. 24, 2001, p.54; Oct. 1, 2001, p.24 (and following pages); Oct. 8, 2001, p.54 (and following pages); Oct. 15, 2001, p.70; Nov. 12, 2001, pp.58 and 60; Nov. 26, 2001, pp.40 and 50; Dec. 24, 2001, p.46

Times (London), Oct. 19, 2001 (multiple articles)

USA Today, Mar. 1, 2001, p.A1

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Online

Biography Resource Center Online, 2002

WORLD WIDE WEB SITES ON BIN LADEN AND RELATED ISSUES

<http://www.mel.org/news/attack.html>

An extensive collection of web pages (with links) devoted to September 11, hosted by the Michigan Electronic Library and organized by subject. Excellent for students.

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/usterror.html>

An extensive collection of web pages (with links) devoted to September 11, hosted by the University of Michigan and organized by subject. Very detailed.

<http://september11.archive.org>

The September 11 Web Archive, a collaboration of the Library of Congress, the Internet Archive, and webarchivist.org. A comprehensive archive of web sites devoted to September 11, including sites from individuals, groups, the press, and other institutions.

<http://www.biography.com>

Biographical information on bin Laden.

<http://firstgov.gov/Topics/Usresponse.shtml>

The federal government's web site on the response to terrorism.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov>

The web site for the U.S. President.

<http://www.fbi.gov/mostwanted/terrorists/fugitives.htm>

The FBI's most wanted list.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen>

Information from a PBS Frontline documentary on bin Laden.

<http://www.pbs.org/americaresponds>

Coverage of bin Laden and the war on terrorism from PBS.

<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/terrorism>

Coverage of bin Laden and the war on terrorism from the *New York Times*. Useful for students and teachers.

http://abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/binladen_profile.html

Coverage of bin Laden and the war on terrorism from ABC News.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/in_depth/world/2001/war_on_terror/default.stm

Coverage of bin Laden and the war on terrorism from the BBC, England.

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Coverage of bin Laden and the war on terrorism from CNN.

http://www.cbsnews.com/htdocs/america_under_attack/bin_laden_framesource.html

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http://www.cbsnews.com/htdocs/america_under_attack/attack_framesource.html

Coverage of the September 11 attack from CBS.

<http://freep.com/jobspage/arabs/>

100 Questions and Answers about Arabs, compiled by the Detroit Free Press.

<http://www.bigchalk.com/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOPortal.woa/wa/BCPageDA/gen~Events~usatragedy>

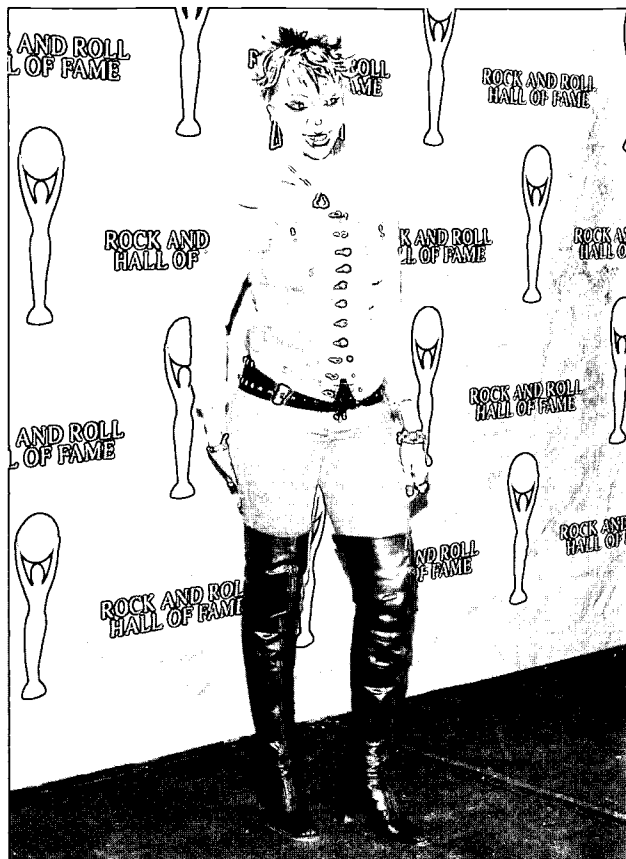
A collection of resources for students and educators from bigchalk.

http://www.newyorker.com/archive/previous/?020218frprsp_previous

Links to articles related to September 11 from the *New Yorker* magazine archives.

http://www.adl.org/terrorism_america/bin_l.asp

Information on Bin Laden and terrorism from the Anti-Defamation League.



Mary J. Blige 1971-

American Singer and Songwriter Known as
"The Queen of Hip-Hop Soul"

Created the Hit Albums *What's the 411*, *Mary*,
and *No More Drama*

BIRTH

Mary Jane Blige (pronounced as in "oblige") was born on November 11, 1971, in Yonkers, New York. Her father, Thomas Blige, was a professional jazz musician who left the family when Mary was young. Her mother, Cora Blige, supported the family by working long hours as a nurse. "My mother made

me strong," Mary stated. "Watching my mother struggle to raise us and feed us made me want to be a stronger woman." Cora Blige later married James Dillard. Mary has an older sister, LaTonya, a younger brother, Bruce, and a younger sister, Jonquell.

YOUTH

Blige grew up primarily in Yonkers, with a few years spent with her grandmother in Savannah, Georgia. In Yonkers, her family lived in a low-income apartment complex called the Schlobohm Housing Projects — nicknamed "slow bomb" by the residents. Mary shared a two-bedroom apartment with her mother and her older sister, as well as assorted members of her extended family. "When you walked into our apartment, we lived very nice," she recalled. "It was small, but we were happy — until we walked outside, because it was the ghetto outside." The projects and the surrounding neighborhood were overrun with drugs and crime. Blige and her sister had to be tough just to survive. "Every day I would be getting into fights over whatever. You always had to prove yourself to keep from getting robbed or jumped," she remembered. "Growing up in the projects is like living in a barrel of crabs. If you try to get out, one of the other crabs tries to pull you down."

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"My mother made me strong," Mary stated.

"Watching my mother struggle to raise us and feed us made me want to be a stronger woman."

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Blige loved music and singing from an early age, although it never occurred to her that she might one day sing professionally. "Singing to us was like eating, you know what I'm saying?" she related. "We was singing anywhere we would go. It was so easy to do. But to be a singer just seemed so far-fetched. It didn't seem like a reality in the projects." Before her father left the family, he taught Mary and her sister how to harmonize. Later, Blige honed her singing talent as a member of the choir at the House of Prayer Pentecostal Church. "People in church would say, 'You should do something with your voice,'" she recalled. "And I'd be like, 'What? I am living in the projects in Yonkers. What am I going to do with my voice?'"

As Blige grew older, her mother further contributed to her love of music by playing the records of some of the great names in rhythm and blues (R&B), soul, and funk, including Sam Cooke, Aretha Franklin, Gladys

Knight, Otis Redding, Stevie Wonder, and Chaka Khan. "All my life, old music has been the best music to me," Blige recalled. "That music does something to me every time I hear it. Old music just does something to me. I don't know what it is. I think it's just the memory, wanting to go back." Another major influence on her musical interests were the early hip-hop rhythms that could be heard throughout her neighborhood. "We had block parties in the neighborhood and all the DJs would come with their records and do their scratching, and everybody's trying to rap," she remembered. "That's where I got all the beats for my songs."

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*"Please stay in school,"
Blige tells her young fans.
"It's not like I want to be a
role model, because I really
don't. But I feel that once you
are visible, there are children
watching you and mothers
allow them to watch you.
You have a responsibility to
people other than yourself.
You owe those children
something and you have
to bump their minds into
something other than
negative messages."*

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school equivalency exam. She has often told her young fans not to make the same mistakes that she did. "Please stay in school," she said. "It's not like I want to be a role model, because I really don't. But I feel that once you are visible, there are children watching you and mothers allow them to watch you. You have a responsibility to people other than yourself. You owe those children something and you have to bump their minds into something other than negative messages."

EDUCATION

Blige attended Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School and Lincoln High School in Yonkers. Her high school specialized in training students in the performing arts, and she often took part in school-sponsored talent shows. Although she had the potential to be a good student, Blige did not apply herself in school. She ended up dropping out in the 11th grade in order to work at a series of part-time jobs.

Since then, however, Blige has often expressed regret over her decision to quit high school. "If I had to do it over, I would finish high school. For real," she stated. "If I had the sense that I have now back then, I would be in college by now. I would have had a bachelor's degree and all of that by now. Education is important no matter what field you want to go into." In 2000, Blige began working with a tutor in order to prepare for the high-



CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Karaoke Tape Leads to a Record Deal

After dropping out of school at the age of 16, Blige held several part-time jobs, including one as a cashier in a department store. She also spent a lot of time hanging out with her friends. When she was 17, she made a tape of herself singing Anita Baker's hit song "Caught Up in the Rapture" at a karaoke studio in a local mall. Although she only made the tape to entertain her friends, it ended up leading to her big break in the music business. "I wasn't looking for a deal, I wasn't looking for anything!" Blige noted. "I was just playing around!" Blige's mother gave the tape to her boyfriend, who gave it to one of his friends, the R&B vocalist Jeff Redd. Redd then passed the tape along to record-company executive Andre Harrell. He liked what he heard and signed the unknown young singer to a recording

contract with Uptown Records. Before she knew it, Blige was in the studio working on an album under the guidance of the well-known producer and hip-hop artist Sean "Puff Daddy/P. Diddy" Combs.

In 1992, Blige finally released her first album, *What's the 411?* It turned out to be a huge hit, selling over two million copies and putting two singles on top of the R&B charts, "Real Love" and "You Remind Me." Reviewers

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"My mother raised me with a lot of respect, but the street raised me with disrespect. I'd be hanging out every night and getting high," Blige said. "I used to do it because I thought it would make me forget about things. It made me forget about it for the moment. But the next day, it was seven times worse. Because the reality is that everything I was trying to run from was still there."

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praised Blige's sound as a unique combination of R&B melodies and hip-hop beats. They claimed that she had created a new, female version of the popular New Jack Swing sound, which they termed New Jill Swing. They also gave her the nickname "The Queen of Hip-Hop Soul." *What's the 411?* proved to be especially popular with African-Americans from urban areas, who seemed to identify with Blige's background. Before long, people began copying her casual yet funky style of dress, which became known as "ghetto fabulous."

Dealing with Fame

Although Blige was thrilled with the success of her first album, she struggled to deal with her sudden rise to fame. After all, she was still basically a shy, 21-year-old high-school dropout who had no experience or training to help her deal with all the attention she received from the media and fans.

She reacted to the pressure by drinking, smoking, and using drugs. "My mother raised me with a lot of respect, but the street raised me with disrespect. I'd be hanging out every night and getting high," Blige said. "I used to do it because I thought it would make me forget about things. It made me forget about it for the moment. But the next day, it was seven times worse. Because the reality is that everything I was trying to run from was still there."

During this time, Blige gained a reputation as a "difficult" artist. She often acted angry, rude, and hostile in public. The media was full of stories about her bad behavior, such as skipping public appearances, showing up late for

photo shoots, arguing with interviewers, and being high on stage. Blige accepted some responsibility for her unprofessional behavior, but she also blamed her record company and the people who were managing her career at that time. "Everyone was making decisions about me and what I should be doing, but I didn't necessarily agree with everything, so I wouldn't do things," she admitted. "The whole business wasn't as glamorous as it appeared to be on the outside." Prior to the release of her second album, Blige worked with a public-relations expert who specialized in helping rising stars deal with media attention. She gained some confidence and started to take charge of her own career. "I guess you could say that I've become more of a businesswoman than I was before," she stated. "I have more creative control over my vision because you can't trust anyone with your money, your life, your image."



Maturing as a Person and as an Artist

In 1994, Blige released her second album, *My Life*. This album, which features the hit singles "I'm Goin' Down" and "Be Happy," debuted in the top spot on Billboard's R&B chart. Blige showed her newfound confidence by writing the lyrics for most of the songs on the album. "*My Life* is not talking about my life totally. It's about everybody's. It's something that people can grasp and feel is for real. It's like, instead of always singing about fairytale stuff, sing about something everyone can relate to," she explained. "When I was writing the songs, everybody I know was going through bad relationships and, yes, I've had my share of bad relationships, so I wanted to talk about it." Reviewers noted that Blige added live horns and strings to many of the songs instead of strictly relying on the hip-hop technique of sampling other songs. Fans seemed to appreciate her efforts, as *My Life* sold more than three million copies.

Blige released her third album, *Share My World*, in 1996. As she worked on this album, she decided that she needed to part company with people



whom she felt were negative influences in her life, including her former mentor, Sean "Puff Daddy/P. Diddy" Combs. She also split up with her boyfriend, Cedric "K-Ci" Hailey of the R&B group Jodeci; she has since revealed that she suffered both mental and physical abuse in that relationship. During this time, Blige renewed her commitment to God and began to work toward loving herself. "I had a lot of people around me who were trying to hurt me—who were able to hurt me because I couldn't see that I meant something," she noted. "Now my family is more involved in my career. There's nothing but love surrounding me. I won't allow anything else."

For *Share My World*, Blige once again wrote many of the songs herself. Her lyrics reflect her growing interest in spirituality and self-respect. "This project is totally different," she stated. "It is about going deep and finding out what the real deal is. And for me, the real deal is about peace and love."

She worked with new producers on this record, including Kenny “Baby-face” Edmonds and Roy Ayers, and ended up with a mellow sound that tended toward mainstream R&B or pop. *Share My World* features the hit songs “Not Gon’ Cry” — which became a sort of anthem for broken-hearted women — as well as “Love Is All We Need” and “Seven Days.”

With the success of *Share My World*, Blige finally began to feel comfortable with her stardom. She opened up in interviews and admitted some of the mistakes she made in the past, including using drugs. “I’ve experienced every feeling that drugs have, every effect that they have on you,” she explained. “And the real deal is that it doesn’t feel good. It consumes your brain cells. It consumes your body. And if you don’t quit, it will kill you. You will die!” Also in 1996, Blige won her first Grammy Award. She earned the honor for her duet with Method Man, “I’ll Be There for You / You’re All I Need.”

Collaborating with Well-Known Artists

In 1999, Blige released her fourth album, *Mary*. Although it featured collaborations with a number of well-known artists — including Lauryn Hill, Elton John, Aretha Franklin, and Eric Clapton — it was her most personal and internally focused work to date. “This album is all about me,” she stated. “That’s not to say you have to love and agree with me, but I’m very happy with it. And in a humble way I’m happy with me and where I’m at right now.” The album, which includes the songs “Deep Inside,” “All That I Can Say,” and “Your Child,” earned three Grammy nominations.

Blige thoroughly enjoyed working with the famous musicians who appeared on *Mary*. She especially liked singing with Aretha Franklin, who was one of her mother’s favorite artists. “That was real. I had my mom come to the studio, and Aretha and my mom were talking and everything,” she recalled. “She’s a wonderful lady, a hardworking lady. And she

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With her recent success, Blige finally began to feel comfortable with her stardom, to open up in interviews, and to admit some of the mistakes she made in the past, including using drugs. “I’ve experienced every feeling that drugs have, every effect that they have on you. And the real deal is that it doesn’t feel good. It consumes your brain cells. It consumes your body. And if you don’t quit, it will kill you. You will die!”

”

Mary



can sing." In her duet with Franklin, called "Don't Waste Your Time," Blige talks about the frustrations of dealing with bad men and the need to regain control of her relationships.

Another song on the *Mary* album features pop music legend Elton John on piano. "Deep Inside" includes some of the familiar notes from John's classic song "Bennie and the Jets." "I loved 'Bennie and the Jets' from the time I was a little girl," Blige stated. "Then I heard Elton was saying on VH1 that I was one of his favorite artists in the R&B world. I thought, 'OK, that's an open door.' So we gave him a call and I ended up going to his concert. As soon as I met Elton, we clicked. That man is as real as they come."

Blige met guitar legend Eric Clapton at a dinner reception for President Bill Clinton. "I was standing inside of a tent and this guy walked up to me and

said, 'I love your music and I love your work.' He looked kind of familiar and I shook his hand. He said, 'I'm Eric Clapton.' And I was like, 'Oh my God! I mean, this is crazy!'" she recalled. "He ended up being so down-to-earth. Eric Clapton is what we call a human, you know?" The two musicians exchanged phone numbers, and Blige called Clapton when she needed someone to contribute a guitar segment to her album.

No More Drama

Blige completed her transformation into a mature and confident artist with the release of her 2001 album, *No More Drama*. "This album is a continuation of a turnaround," she explained. "The *Mary* album was a clean up. It was about cleaning up around me because I still had debris left around me. And this album? It's about solidifying and moving even further with the things I've learned and the strides I've made." On *No More Drama*, Blige moves deeper into R&B and also incorporates elements of rock, blues, and gospel. The album includes the upbeat dance tune "Family Affair," which became Blige's first single to hit number one on the Billboard pop charts.

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"I'd like people to be entertained but I'd like them to hear what I'm saying, too," Blige said about her recent CD, No More Drama.

"But if it doesn't grab you right away, cool. Just dance to it. Just feel it until you are ready to hear what I have to say, and then whatever happens will happen."

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Like *Mary*, *No More Drama* features performances from several well-known guest stars, including Eve, Missy Elliot, and Lenny Kravitz. The title track, which was written by top producers Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, opens with the instrumental theme for the TV soap opera "The Young and the Restless." "Jimmy and Terry wrote it without me and when I heard it I was like, 'Do you have a private detective following me around?' Because this song is so where I'm at. This song is demanding that you stay away from my life if you're going to bring me drama."

Blige hopes that fans understand her message about taking care of themselves and avoiding "drama," or unnecessary physical and emotional pain. "I'd like people to be entertained but I'd like them to hear what I'm saying, too," she stated. "But if it doesn't grab you right away, cool. Just dance to it. Just feel it until you are ready to hear what I have to say, and then whatever happens will happen."



Thanks to her unique sound and the success of her albums, Mary J. Blige has joined the ranks of the superstars of the music world. The power and clarity of her voice has been compared to that of Whitney Houston, Toni Braxton, and Mariah Carey. Yet music reviewers have claimed that Blige brings more emotion to her work than many other singers, perhaps because of her background. Blige considers herself lucky to have escaped the ghetto and to have found a way to make a living doing something that she loves. "All I want to do is sing," she noted. "So I'll sing as long as my voice lasts."

HOME AND FAMILY

Blige owns a home on Long Island, New York, which she shares with her sister LaTonya and her young family. "Being with my sister makes me feel

comfortable and safe," she explained. "I'm not the type of person to live in a big house by myself." Blige has never been married and does not have children, although she once talked about what she considered her ideal man. "My ideal man does not have to have a whole bunch of money," she noted. "He has to be secure. He has to be God-fearing. He has to love his mother. And he has to respect all women."

Now it seems that Blige has found that man. Recently she has revealed that she's engaged, although she hasn't disclosed the name of her fiance. She has also said that they're planning a small wedding, but they haven't yet set a date.

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

Blige is very active in charity work. For example, she appears in anti-drug public service announcements, encourages young people to vote through MTV's Rock the Vote campaign, and works to improve inner-city neighborhoods with the organization 100 Black Men. Blige is also highly visible in the fight against AIDS. She served as a spokesperson for MAC Cosmetics in their Viva Glam III campaign, which raised \$4 million to help people with AIDS. She received the *Rolling Stone* Do Something Award, among several other honors, in recognition of her humanitarian work.

Blige has dabbled in acting, making guest appearances in several films and television series. She has also served as the basis of a hip-hop super heroine character in an Internet-based animated series.

RECORDINGS

- What's the 411?* 1992
- My Life*, 1994
- Share My World*, 1996
- Mary*, 1999
- No More Drama*, 2001

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Blige once talked about what she considered her ideal man. "My ideal man does not have to have a whole bunch of money. He has to be secure. He has to be God-fearing. He has to love his mother. And he has to respect all women."

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HONORS AND AWARDS

Grammy Award: 1996, Best Rap Performance by a Duo or Group, for "I'll Be There for You/You're All I Need" with Method Man
Lady of Soul Awards: 1996, Best Solo R&B/Soul Single, for "Not Gon' Cry"; 1998, Best Solo R&B/Soul Album of the Year, for *Share My World*; 2000, Best Solo R&B/Soul Album of the Year, for *Mary*; Best R&B/Soul or Rap Song of the Year, for "All That I Can Say"
Do Something Award (*Rolling Stone*): 2000
Lifetime Service Award (100 Black Men): 2000
Soul Train Music Awards: 2000 (two awards), Female Entertainer of the Year and Album of the Year by a Solo Female Artist
BET Award: 2001, Best Female R&B Artist
Patrick Lippert Award (Rock the Vote): 2001

FURTHER READING

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Contemporary Musicians, Vol. 15, 1995
Encyclopedia of Rock Stars, 1996
Who's Who among African Americans, 2000

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Boston Globe, June 9, 2000, p.D13
Ebony, Oct. 1995, p.116; Jan. 1998, p.60; June 2000, p.100
Entertainment Weekly, May 2, 1997, p.54; Aug. 20, 1999, p.123
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Time, Apr. 28, 1997, p.70; Aug. 16, 1999, p.69

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Washington Post, Aug. 18, 1999, p.C1; Aug. 26, 2001, p.G8

ADDRESS

MCA Records
1755 Broadway
8th Floor
New York, NY 10019

WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

<http://www.mjblige.com>

<http://www.rollingstone.com/artists>



Billy Gilman 1988-

American Singer

Creator of the Country Hit "One Voice"

BIRTH

William Wendell (Billy) Gilman was born on May 24, 1988, in Westerly, Rhode Island. His father, Bill Gilman, is a technician at a fuel company, and his mother, Fran Gilman, worked as a secretary, but is now a stay-at-home mom. His brother, Colin, is three years younger.

CHOOSING A CAREER

His family and musical managers agree: it wasn't so much a matter of Billy Gilman choosing a career, as a career choosing him. His ear for music, passion for performing, and sense of poise have been advanced since he was a toddler. After listening with his grandparents to the classic sounds of country artists Tammy Wynette, Patsy Cline, and George Jones, he had his first musical revelation before he was three. His mother had videotaped a Sea World special, thinking he would enjoy the whales and dolphins. Instead, he was blown away by country star Pam Tillis, who sang her rollicking hit, "Cleopatra, Queen of Denial." After listening a couple of times, tiny Billy knew every word. After three listens, he sang along perfectly. Soon he began to belt out country songs to whomever would listen.

"The other kids would beg him to go outside and play, but he just wanted to perform," his mother said. "We bought him a little karaoke machine when he was five, and every holiday he'd put performances on. You couldn't stop him." Billy agreed. "I knew I wanted to sing ever since first grade," he said. "Other kids would bring in toy trucks and dinosaurs for show and tell, and I'd bring in a tape and sing." He sang so much that his family dubbed him "Big Mouth," a nickname that holds to this day. His early performances from the top of the kitchen table, holding a plastic guitar, gave way to appearances at local events. He made his big-audience debut at the Swamp Yankee Days Festival in Charlston, Rhode Island, when he was eight. "He just loved every minute of it," his mother said. "He's just a natural performer."

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"I knew I wanted to sing ever since first grade," Gilman said. "Other kids would bring in toy trucks and dinosaurs for show and tell, and I'd bring in a tape and sing."

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CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

From the Kitchen Table to Nashville

Gilman started on the path to success when his music-loving grandmother recruited a local voice coach, Angela Bacari, to assess his talent. Bacari agreed only grudgingly to hear the boy. But her attitude changed when eight-year-old Gilman began to sing. "I cried, I really did," Bacari said. "He was incredible." She launched Gilman on a regular voice-training regi-

men. He also continued to perform at local fairs and functions, and soon he was opening shows for such well-known artists as Lori Morgan, JoDee Messina, and his idol, Pam Tillis.

When Gilman was 10, Bacari got a musician friend to send a tape to Ray Benson. As the leader of Asleep at the Wheel, a well-known Western Swing band, Benson is a veteran insider in country music. "I said, 'Wow, this kid is *how* old?'" Benson remembered with a laugh. "He's just so talented. I haven't heard a kid sing like that since Wayne Newton [a teen star of

the 1950s]." In 1999, several months before his 11th birthday, Gilman traveled to Austin, Texas, to record demo tapes with Benson and his band. As a result, Gilman attracted the interest of Scott Siman, a top country-music manager. Soon Gilman had landed a recording contract with Sony Music Nashville, Epic Division. "We went to see him open for [the country rock band] Alabama, and he got three standing ovations. He worked the crowd like he's a 30-year veteran," recalled Blake Chancey, a Sony executive and co-producer of Gilman's CDs. "To an extent you can create some of these boy bands, but you can't create a singing phenomenon like Billy. This is something that really just fell into our laps."

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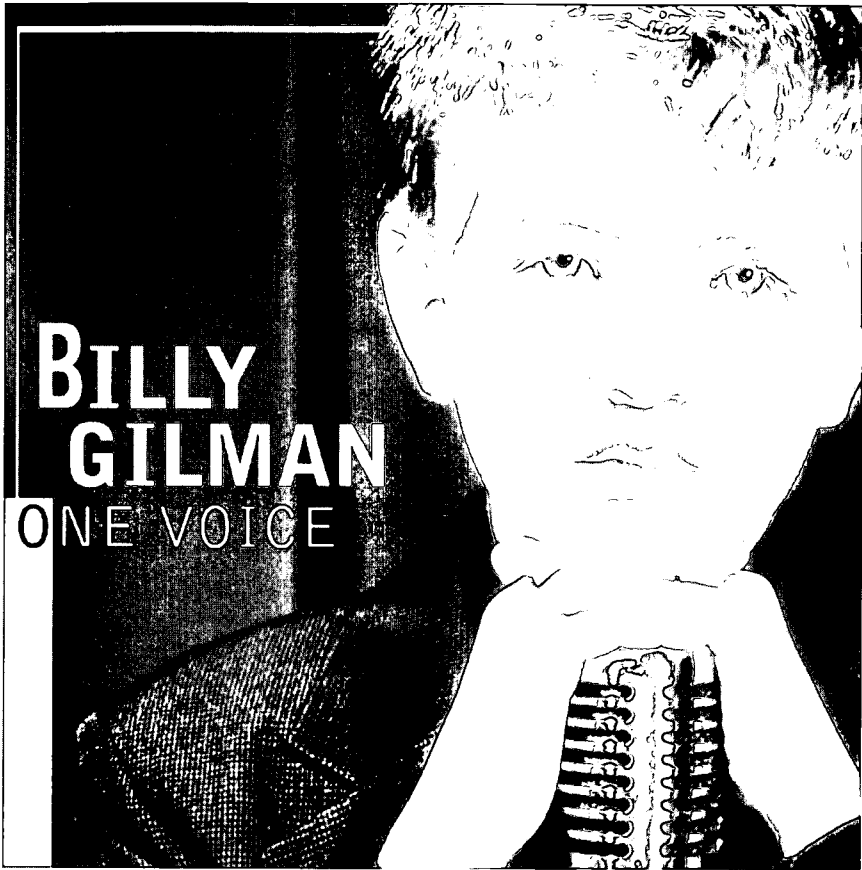
When Gilman was about 11, according to Sony executive Blake Chancey, "We went to see him open for [the country rock band] Alabama, and he got three standing ovations. He worked the crowd like he's a 30-year veteran. To an extent you can create some of these boy bands, but you can't create a singing phenomenon like Billy. This is something that really just fell into our laps."

One Voice

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With his first album, *One Voice*, Gilman achieved a level of success that he describes as "more than I ever dreamed of" and "overwhelmingly terrific." Its centerpiece is undoubtedly the title cut and hit single "One Voice," an anti-gun, anti-violence anthem sung from a schoolboy's point of view. Written by the album's co-producers Don Cook and David Malloy, the ballad yearns for a simpler, more innocent time in America. Gilman sings wistfully, in angelic tones, of "a house, a yard, a neighborhood where you could ride your new bike to school" and parents "who still believe in the Golden Rule." The accompanying video is primarily shot in black-and-white tones. Gilman is pictured on a school





bus, where a group of boys pass around a handgun. One of the boys tucks the weapon into his bookbag. From the bus, the viewer glimpses other disturbing scenes—an argumentative couple and a teen mother with her baby—before the vignette ends hopefully: the boy with the gun tosses it into a river. “It’s a good message,” Billy said. “People don’t have to use guns except for hunting. And they should be locked up so kids can’t get them.”

The single “One Voice” clearly struck a chord with listeners. In the wake of tragedies like the school shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado and elsewhere, listeners embraced the song as an expression of hope. “One Voice” debuted on Country Music Television a week before Gilman’s 12th birthday in May 2000, and it quickly landed on Billboard magazine’s best-selling country singles chart. With that, Gilman became the youngest

country singer ever to have a Billboard hit. The song's popularity continued to skyrocket. Within three months of its release, the song had overtaken "Breathe" by Faith Hill as the nation's No. 1 country single.

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Gilman gave a star-making performance at the 2000 Academy of Country Music Awards, when his rendition of the country classic "Roly Poly" brought the audience to its feet and made him a sensation overnight. "My jaw just hit the floor," said music journalist Phyllis Stark. "Here was this pee-wee kid in leather pants just nailing that song. And when he got a standing ovation from all those industry types, that was astonishing, because they are the most jaded professionals. They're not easily impressed."

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In addition to its stand-out single, the *One Voice* album features remakes of several old country favorites, including Bobby Goldsboro's "Little Things," Tammy Wynette's "'Til I Can Make It On My Own," and Thurston Harris's "Little Bitty Pretty One." "It's so raucous, it's really rockin'," Gilman said of the Harris song, and added that it's one of his favorites to sing. The album also includes "I Think She Likes Me," a song about young love, and "The Snake Song," a silly number about a reptile that falls in love with a garden hose. Gilman called it "a real kid's song" that he especially enjoys singing.

Reaction from Critics and Fans

Critical response to the album was generally good. Many commentators agreed with Richard Corliss of *Time* magazine, who called Gilman a "real singer . . . with impressive breath control and a fine sense of drama." A minority objected, however, faulting the recording as overly sweet. There was no disagreement among his fans, however. Powered by the popularity of the "One Voice" single and video, Gilman's debut album soon reached platinum status, selling over one million copies; to date it has sold a total

of about two million copies. With that accomplishment, Gilman became the youngest artist ever to release a platinum-selling disk.

Helping to fuel the album's sales were Gilman's charismatic appearances on national television. He burst onto the national scene just before the release of "One Voice" with a star-making performance at the Academy of Country Music Awards in May 2000. His rendition of the country classic



"Roly Poly," backed by Asleep at the Wheel, brought the audience to its feet and made Gilman a sensation overnight. "My jaw just hit the floor," said music journalist Phyllis Stark. "Here was this pee-wee kid in leather pants just nailing that song. And when he got a standing ovation from all those industry types, that was astonishing, because they are the most jaded professionals. They're not easily impressed." Legions of new fans cheered, too, as Gilman made the rounds of such television programs as "The Oprah Winfrey Show," "The Today Show," "Live with Regis Philbin," "The Rosie O'Donnell Show," and "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno." Besides his vocal power, Gilman impressed viewers with charm, good manners, and extraordinary poise. The *New York Post* summed up the opin-

ion of many: "There are few gentleman in country music as articulate, polite, smart, and talented as Billy Gilman."

Christmas Songs and Grammy Nominations

In 2000 Gilman also recorded *Classic Christmas*, a CD that showcases his soaring voice on classics like "Winter Wonderland" and new numbers like the single "Warm and Fuzzy." On "Dream a Dream," Gilman teamed up with Charlotte Church, the teen-aged English classical soprano. While *Classic Christmas* didn't take critics or fans by storm, it sold well, chalking up sales of about half a million copies. It also produced Gilman's first television special, "Billy Gilman's Classic Christmas" on TNN in December 2000.

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Gilman's passionate performance of "One Voice" at the 2001 American Music Awards earned a thunderous standing ovation. "I was really nervous, because there was a cool range of music there that night. But to see all the rap artists standing up for me, I literally wanted to cry. It was really touching."

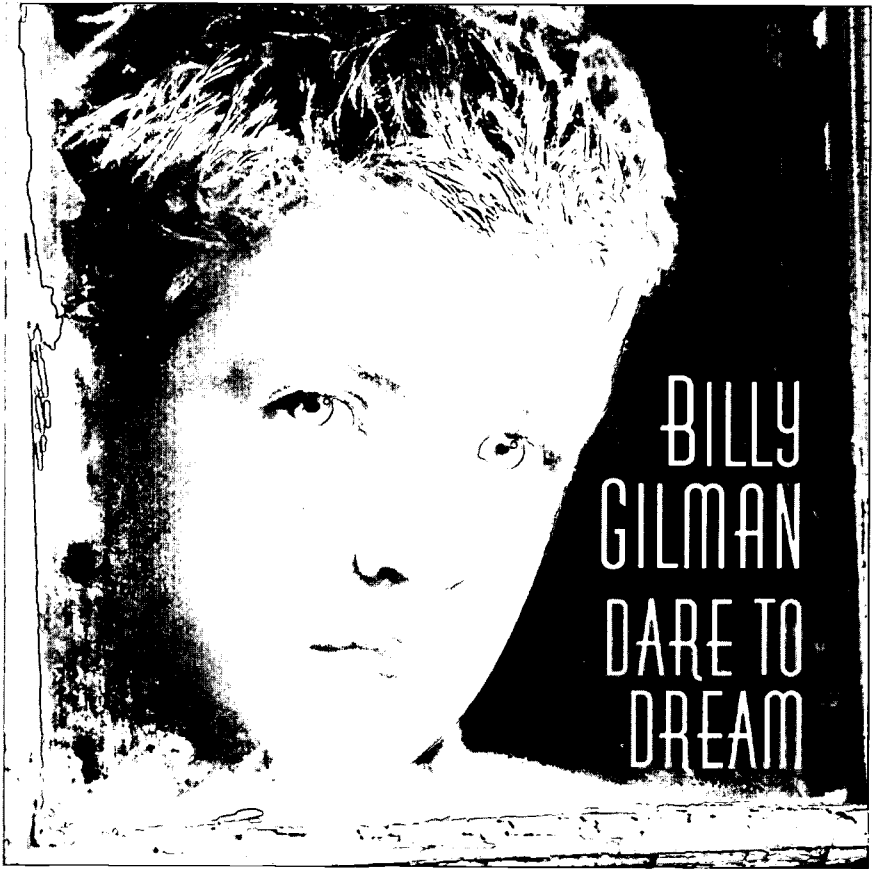
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In January 2001, Gilman became the youngest solo artist ever to receive a Grammy Award nomination. "One Voice" received two nominations, for Best Male Country Vocal Performance and for Best Country Song. Competition in the best-performance category included the country legends Vince Gill, Dwight Yoakam, and Johnny Cash. When Cash won, Gilman could only repeat what he'd said all along, how privileged he felt to be among the nominees. In January he reached a wider audience with his appearance at the American Music Awards telecast. His passionate performance of "One Voice" earned a thunderous standing ovation. "I was really nervous, because there was a cool range

of music there that night," he recalled. "But to see all the rap artists standing up for me, I literally wanted to cry. It was really touching." Gilman walked away that evening with the award for Favorite New Country Artist, telling the audience: "Thank you. Never in a million trillion years would I ever imagine I'd be winning an award like this."

Dare to Dream

In May 2001, Gilman celebrated his 13th birthday and the release of his third album, *Dare to Dream*. The material includes several forays into ro-



mantic love in songs like "She's My Girl," "Our First Kiss," and "Almost Love," plus a song about a boy's love for his mother, "The Woman in My Life." The compilation reflects also a serious side in such songs as "My Time on Earth," "Some Things I Know," and "Elisabeth," all of which treat grown-up themes. *Dare to Dream* sold half a million copies, but did not equal the success of his debut album. Some reviewers questioned the producers' choice of material, and noted that young Gilman was out of his depth with the love songs and somber ballads.

Life on the Road

Critics tend to be enthusiastic, however, in response to Gilman's live performances. The *Boston Herald* called him a "true phenomenon, a performer with that elusive 'it.'" He spent the summer of 2001 on a 70-city tour with

fellow child singer Jessica Andrews, traveling by tour bus. If his family isn't available to travel with him on tour, he is accompanied by his voice coach, Bacari, who is also his personal manager. As much as he loves the excitement of traveling, Gilman has said that life on the road has its challenges. "I do get lonely, kind of, but I have people [with me] who are kids at heart, so I have lots of fun with them. [If] we're on the bus and we're not doing anything, I get a little homesick." Among activities he misses while away from home are birthday parties, pillow fights, and playing video games late into the night. Gilman said that fame hasn't affected his relationships with

friends at home. "I still have the same friends I had in school. They're really good — there's no jealousy at all."

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Future Plans

With pure, high-pitched tones as his trademark, Gilman is often asked "What will happen when your voice changes?" He usually replies that he will face the changes as they happen. "I have to work with it and take it one step at a time," he said recently. "My voice is changing every day." In the meantime, Gilman does vocal exercises to ensure that he will be able to cope as his voice gets deeper. According to his co-producer Blake Chancey, "I don't know how much his voice will change, but I think he's got that superstar quality about him on stage and in the way he sings. I think we're going to be hearing from

him for a long time." One of Gilman's adult fans put it more simply: "People keep wondering what will happen when his voice changes. You can't change talent. You can't change stage presence."

Eventually, Gilman would like to diversify as a performer. "Hopefully, sometime in the very near future, I would like to do a movie or a television series," he said. "I want to do what I love to do, and that's make people laugh. I would love to do all the different kinds of stuff there is to do in the entertainment industry." When asked by a journalist what would happen if his career disappeared overnight, Gilman said that "I would just hope that people would remember that I was pleasing on stage, and that my songs

were good. I hope they remember that I loved to sing. Because I really do. I really love to sing.”

MAJOR INFLUENCES

Gilman has said that his musical inspirations are his early musical love, Pam Tillis, and his voice coach, Angela Bacari. He has cited two female singers as his favorite performers: “Patsy Cline because her voice is just so strong,” he said. “But the voice that inspires me most is Barbra Streisand. The way she can go from belting out loud to real down mellow.” He likes all kind of music, including pop, rock, and rap. On his CD player at any given time he may have Tim McGraw, Faith Hill, Celine Dion, Backstreet Boys, *N Sync, or Britney Spears.

EDUCATION

Gilman left regular school for a private tutor around the time he signed his record contract. He is tutored four to five hours a day when he is at home in Rhode Island. He prefers words to numbers, listing spelling, reading, and writing as his favorite subjects. “Math isn’t my favorite, but it’s getting easier,” he said. “I have a vision of going to college and stuff,” he added. “But [performing] is basically what I want to do for the rest of my life. I know that for sure. It’s my job.” When pressed, Gilman said he would consider training as a veterinarian or studying management in college—to learn the entertainment business. “I actually did want to be a doctor, but I can’t stand the blood and guts,” he said.

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

“I love to fish, bowl, ski—water and snow—and like to fight with my younger brother Colin,” Gilman said. He also enjoys roller-blading, PlayStation 2, reading Harry Potter books, and surfing the web. His family shares their rural home with several pets: three cats named Zee, Ta, and Oscar; a dog named Whizzer (after one of the puppies in *101 Dalmatians*); and a hamster named Ralph. His most prized possession, however, is his four-wheel motor bike. “I flip it over and jump off it, like 10-foot-high jumps, he says. “I’m very daring.” A confessed game-show junkie, Gilman tested his skill when he appeared on a special edition of “Hollywood Squares” in December 2001. He gave golf a try—until a runaway golf ball hit him full on the mouth and knocked out his front tooth. He is now a devoted fan of baseball.

CREDITS

Recordings

One Voice, 2000
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Television Special

Billy Gilman's Classic Christmas, 2000

HONORS AND AWARDS

Billboard Music Video Award (*Billboard*): 2000, Best New Country Artist
Top Ten Youth in Entertainment Award (*Daily Variety*): 2000
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New Country Artist

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BRIEF ENTRY

Leanne Nakamura 1982-

American Student and Environmentalist

EARLY YEARS

Leanne Nakamura was born on September 18, 1982, in Honolulu, Hawaii. She grew up in Kaneohe, on the island of Oahu in Hawaii. Her parents are Lorene Nakamura, a bookkeeper for a company that does tax returns, and Waring Nakamura, a sales manager for a food company. Leanne has one sister, Jenna.

Nakamura attended Castle High School, where she was involved in a lot of school clubs and other activities. She was involved in the Key Club, the One World Club, the Windward Teen Council, and the Millennium Young People's Congress. She also worked on *Na Pali*, the school newspaper. It was while she was still a student that Nakamura first started volunteering for environmental projects.

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“I didn't like environmental projects at first. I'm a wimp so I thought things were too dirty for me . . . plus I live in paradise! But while attending a conference . . . I realized that slowly we will start losing 'paradise' and we have to do something to keep it. I live in Kaneohe, a valley beside the Ko'olau Mountains. It's very beautiful, and after a while I realized that I took it for granted.”

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While in high school, Nakamura and many of her friends became involved with an environmental group called Protect the Planet (PTP). After a while, though, there were some problems within that group. Many of the student members began to question the leadership decisions of the group's director, an adult, and to question the allocation of money donated to the group. There were also charges of sexual improprieties involving the

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Nakamura began volunteering as a teenager, when her mother told her to find volunteer work or to clean the house. “I've been volunteering since then,” she said. She started to work at a local elementary school summer program and to help out with gardening and babysitting at the nearby Ronald McDonald House. Located near hospitals, Ronald McDonald Houses are large homes where the families of sick children can stay while their children receive treatment. Supported by McDonald's and other donors, these homes are intended to make family members comfortable in a home-like environment, and at a very low cost.

When she first started doing volunteer work, Nakamura didn't consider herself an environmentalist. “I didn't like environmental projects at first,” she later admitted. “I'm a wimp so I



Nakamura at the beach, showing the type of fishing net that she helped to clean up.

director, who was later arrested and sent to prison. Many of the student members, including Nakamura, decided to leave that group. They decided to form a new organization they called SAVE, for Student Actions and Values for the Environment. "[We] had a choice of whether to continue with PTP, and the members decided not to," Nakamura says. "We then built the foundation of SAVE with the YWCA's guidance. We held meeting

after meeting trying to decide what to do, and SAVE was the outcome." A nonprofit group run for and by students, SAVE was dedicated to completing environmental projects, to increasing environmental awareness by educating the public, and to working with other organizations and clubs to meet these goals.

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After cleaning up Kualoa Beach, Nakamura and SAVE went on to other cleanup efforts, including cleaning up a local canal and storm drain and cleaning up firecracker debris from area beaches.

"It's hard to believe that something as beautiful as Hawaii could go bad. . . . People take this place for granted. They forget how special Hawaii is and how lucky they are to live here."

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After cleaning up Kualoa Beach, Nakamura and SAVE went on to other cleanup efforts, including cleaning up a local canal and storm drain and cleaning up firecracker debris from area beaches. "It's hard to believe that something as beautiful as Hawaii could go bad. . . . People take this place for granted. They forget how special Hawaii is and how lucky they are to live here."

In recognition of her environmental efforts, Nakamura won the 2000 Prudential Spirit of Community Award. These awards are given out to young people across America who volunteer their time and talents to improve their communities. They are sponsored by the Prudential Insurance Company in partnership with the National Association of Secondary

Beach Cleanup

One such environmental project was beach cleanup. In May 1999, when she was a junior in high school, Nakamura learned about a problem along the shoreline of Kualoa Regional Park. Fishing nets would wash ashore from fishing boats and then would catch on the beach and on offshore reefs. The huge nets were eroding the beach sand, damaging the coral reef, and killing the resident fish and sea turtles.

Nakamura decided to organize a cleanup. She called all her friends, as well as representatives from school clubs and other area environmental groups. "I expected maybe 30 people, but 60 showed up," she later said. "I thought, 'Oh, my God, do we have enough food for all these people?' They worked for four weekends and ended up hauling away seven pickup truck-loads of fishnet and other garbage.

School Principals (NASSP). After winning the award, Nakamura traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with other award winners. Afterward, both she and her group SAVE received a lot of publicity, including articles in *Teen People* and *Reader's Digest*, where she was named a "Teen Hero."

Recent Activities

After graduating from Castle High School in 2000, Nakamura went on to the University of Hawaii at Manoa, where she is currently a student. She is thinking about majoring in speech, because, she says, "I really like the type of people in it, but I want to go into PR [public relations] and help non-profit as well as profit organizations with PR. Sometimes small organizations have great ideas, they just need to get well-known. (In other words, I want to make tons of money off of profit businesses and lend free support to non-profit organizations.)"

Nakamura's dedication to volunteer work has continued now that she's in college. For the time being, though, SAVE has been suspended, as Nakamura and the other members all dispersed to attend college. But that hasn't dampened their enthusiasm for community service. "The members have left for the mainland for college," she reports, "but now we're each volunteering in the community in different organizations. Once in a while we'll volunteer for a cleanup." And Nakamura continues with other community groups, working with the Service Learning Program at University of Hawaii, Aloha United Way projects, the YWCA, and other organizations.

Advice for Other Teens

Nakamura has this advice for other young people who want to make a difference in their communities. "Anyone can be called a 'Teen Hero.' I just got a bunch of my friends together and created a club that did cleanups. I

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I just got a bunch of my friends together and created a club that did cleanups. I just want to show younger students that if they work hard for what they want, have a passion for what they believe in, and have faith in themselves, then they're a Teen Hero. That's all it takes."

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HONORS AND AWARDS

Prudential Spirit of Community Awards: 2000

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ADDRESS

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Condoleezza Rice 1954-

American Scholar and Political Advisor
National Security Advisor to President George W.
Bush

BIRTH

Condoleezza Rice was born on November 14, 1954, in Birmingham, Alabama. Her mother, Angelena Rice, was a music and science teacher, and her father, John Rice, was a teacher and Presbyterian minister when their daughter was born. Condoleezza (kahn-dah-LEE-zah) is their only child. Angelena created her daughter's unusual name from an Italian musi-

cal term, "con dolcezza," meaning "with sweetness." She is usually called "Condi" by friends.

YOUTH

Condoleezza Rice grew up in a loving family that expected much of her. She was taking piano lessons by age three, and within a few years she added Spanish and French lessons. She was reading before she was five, so her mother signed her up for all kinds of book clubs.

“*To protect Rice against racism, her parents taught her that she would have to be "twice as good" at everything in order to compete in the white world. "My parents were very strategic," she says. "I was going to be so well prepared, and I was going to do all of these things that were revered in white society so well, that I would be armored somehow from racism. I would be able to confront white society on its own terms."*

Rice has called her parents the most important influence in her life, and she has seldom strayed from that influence. She loved to play with the neighborhood kids, but she was rarely out of sight of her mother. Carolyn Hunter, the mother of a childhood friend, recalls that one day Condi was playing school in their garage. Hunter closed the garage door to keep out the mosquitos, but Condi stopped her. "Miz Hunter," she said, "If you let the door down, I'll have to go home." When Hunter asked why, she replied, "my mama can't watch me."

A Segregated World

Rice grew up in a world where blacks and whites lived completely separate, segregated lives. It was the time of "Jim Crow" laws in the United States, when blacks were relegated to second-class status in all things. All the

features of daily life — schools, stores, neighborhoods, even drinking fountains — were marked "colored" or "whites only," and facilities for blacks were always inferior.

Rice lived in a middle-class black suburb in a family that had produced three generations of college-educated professionals. Her parents taught her that she would have to be "twice as good" at everything in order to compete in the white world. "My parents were very strategic," she says. "I

was going to be so well prepared, and I was going to do all of these things that were revered in white society so well, that I would be armored somehow from racism. I would be able to confront white society on its own terms." It was through achievement, they believed, that racism would be defeated. Condi Rice's cousin, Connie Rice, a leading civil rights attorney, talks about the expectations that came with being a Rice. "Our grandfathers had this indomitable outlook," she says. "It went: Racism is the way of the world, but it's got nothing to do with your mission, which is to be the best damned whatever-you're-going-to-be in the world. Life was a regimen. Read a book a day. Religion, religion, religion. The Rices were kind of joyless except for Condi's dad. But if there's one thing about Rice kids, there is nothing crushed about us—not our spirit, not our intellect, nothing. We just can't be conquered."

Rice describes her neighborhood this way: "My whole community was determined not to let their children's horizons be limited by growing up in segregated Birmingham. Sometimes I think they overcompensated because they wanted their kids to be so much better. My parents were extraordinary, as were their parents, so I come from a long line of family whose belief was, You can do it, but you have to work really hard—and you're not allowed to make excuses."

Rice's parents did their best to shelter her from racism, but when confronted with it, they were firm in their demand to be treated with dignity. In an incident from her childhood often quoted in profiles of Rice, she and her mother went shopping in one of Birmingham's better stores. Angelena Rice picked out a dress for her daughter to try on. But when they approached the store clerk, the clerk indicated that Condi would have to use a storage room and not the dressing room, which was reserved for whites only. Angelena looked the woman in the eye. "My daughter will try on this dress in a dressing room, or I'm not spending my money here." While Condi tried on the dress, the clerk fearfully guarded the entrance to the dressing room—afraid of losing her commission and afraid of being fired for breaking a "rule" of the segregated world.

The Civil Rights Movement

In the 1950s, the civil rights movement began to galvanize blacks all over the U.S. Led by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and others, the movement promoted nonviolent protest as a means of achieving equal rights for blacks. Their methods included sit-ins at lunch counters, non-violent marches, and the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. In an act of civil disobedience, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus

to a white man and was arrested. In protest, blacks refused to ride the city buses until they had equal access to public transportation. In Montgomery and elsewhere, protesters were often beaten and jailed for taking part in civil rights demonstrations. (For more information on Rosa Parks, see *Biography Today*, April 1992, and Update in the 1994 Annual Cumulation.)

Birmingham, Alabama, Rice's hometown, had a reputation as a hotbed of racial discrimination. And this spirit of racial hatred led to acts of violence that rocked the nation and touched Rice personally. In 1963, the 16th Avenue Baptist Church in Birmingham was bombed by white racists. Four girls were killed in the bombing; one of them, Denise McNair, had gone to school with Rice.

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*As Condoleezza Rice recalls,
“our parents really did have
us convinced that you
couldn't have a hamburger
at Woolworth's, but you
could be President of the
United States.”*

John Rice was a popular figure in the neighborhood, beloved as a high school teacher, football coach, and minister of the Presbyterian church. He encouraged the young people of his neighborhood to achieve in school and on the athletic field. But he never tried to persuade his daughter or his community to join the civil rights movement and take part in the marches. While he believed in the fight for civil rights, he did not embrace the tactics of the movement. “My father was not a march-in-the-street preacher,” says Rice. According to Dale Russakoff of *The Washington*

Post, John Rice objected to the use of children in civil rights protests. Russakoff said that Rice “strenuously opposed the tactic that ultimately broke white business resistance to ending segregation in stores downtown—recruiting children to march into police commissioner Bull Connor's phalanx of officers, police dogs, and fire hoses, and overflow the jails.” “He saw no reason to put children at risk,” says Condoleezza Rice. “He would never put his own child at risk.”

Yet as tensions grew, John Rice and his neighbors took turns guarding their community from night riders, whites armed with guns who would ride into black communities to shoot black people and burn their homes. As some of his former students from school and from church joined the civil rights movement, John Rice continued to preach that it was through achievement that racial equality would be reached. “I want you to fight with your mind,” he told them. As Condoleezza Rice recalls, “our parents

really did have us convinced that you couldn't have a hamburger at Woolworth's, but you could be President of the United States."

EDUCATION

Rice attended an all-black school in Birmingham, where she was an outstanding student. When the school didn't have the money to buy decent textbooks, her father and others in the neighborhood raised funds to buy them. When the curriculum didn't provide enough stimulation for the more gifted students, he and others organized after-school enrichment programs.



Rice did so well in school that she skipped both first and seventh grades. When she was 11, the family moved from Birmingham to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where she attended school while her father served as dean of Stillman College for two years. When she was 14, the family moved to Denver, Colorado, where her father had been named Vice Chancellor of the University of Denver. There, she entered an elite Catholic prep school where she was one of only three black students. It was the first time she'd ever been in a classroom with white students. In Denver, she added ice skating to piano as an extracurricular activity. She'd get up early to skate, then attend school, then return home to study and practice piano.

College Years

Rice continued to excel in school, earning enough credits to graduate at age 15. She entered the University of Denver while finishing her senior year of high school. Despite such high achievement, she still faced racist attitudes. A counselor at her high school told her that, based on standardized test scores, she really wasn't "college material." Rice's response was to prove her counselor wrong.

Rice continued to be an excellent student at the University of Denver. She was emerging as the intelligent, articulate, confident, and gracious young woman who would go on to achieve so much in the academic and political world. And she refused to let racial prejudice define her. Once, in a class in

her early years in college, a professor lectured on the racial theories of William Schockley, who claimed that blacks were intellectually inferior to whites. Rice rose to confront the professor. She recalls her response: "From somewhere deep within myself I said to him, 'Who do you think you are? I'm better at your culture than you are. I'm the one who plays Beethoven. I'm the one who speaks French. So obviously this can be taught.'"

"It was leaving that class that it occurred to me that I think that had been my mother and father's strategy," Rice recalls. "You had to be better at their

culture than they were. Recognize that you're always going to be judged more harshly. They made certain I was never going to be found wanting."

“*People ask me 'Why do you love Russian culture?' just like they ask 'What does she see in him?'*” says Rice.

“I can't explain it—there was just an attraction. I read everything I can find about it. When I'm in Moscow, I feel at home more than I do in, say, Los Angeles.”

When Rice first started college, she planned to study music and become a concert pianist. But sometime in her junior career she began to doubt that she had the talent to become a professional musician. She'd attended a music camp where she met students who "could play from sight what it had taken me all year to learn. I thought, murdering Beethoven—that's what I'm going to end up teaching 13-year-olds." It was a hard lesson to learn, but she faced her limitations and went in search of another major. "I went to my parents, who

had spent a fortune and all of their time turning me into a pianist, and said, 'Mom and Dan, I'm changing my major.' My father said, 'To what?' I said, 'I don't know—but I know that I don't want to be a pianist.'"

Switching to Soviet Studies

Rice took courses in several academic areas in search of a new major. Then, as a junior, she took a course in international politics that changed her life. It was taught by Josef Korbel, a former Czech diplomat and the father of future Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. She recalls in particular a lecture Korbel gave on Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union. Rice recalls it as "love at first sight." She'd found her calling.

Rice focused on Soviet studies, learning Russian and becoming captivated with the people and culture of Russia. "People ask me 'Why do you love

Russian culture?’ just like they ask ‘What does she see in him,’” says Rice. “I can’t explain it — there was just an attraction. I read everything I can find about it. When I’m in Moscow, I feel at home more than I do in, say, Los Angeles.”

Rice and Korbelt were a good team. She called him “one of the most central figures in my life, next to my parents,” and he considered her a brilliant student. She graduated with honors from Denver in 1974 at the age of 19, and he encouraged her to continue her studies. Rice went on to Notre Dame for her master’s degree in political science, which she received in 1975. Korbelt encouraged her to return to Denver, to the department of international relations, which he had founded, to study for her doctorate (Ph.D.). “You are very talented. You have to become a professor,” he told her. She began her doctoral studies under Korbelt, who died in 1977, sadly, before she had completed her degree. When she published her first book, *Uncertain Allegiance: The Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Army*, she dedicated it to her parents and to Korbelt.

Rice received her Ph.D. from the University of Denver in 1981 and went to Stanford University, where she had been invited to serve as a fellow at the Center for International Security and Arms Control. Stanford would be her home for most of the next 20 years.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Stanford University

Rice had been offered a one-year fellowship at Stanford, but after several months she was offered a position as an assistant professor in the political science department. She was an excellent teacher, and she won Stanford’s highest teaching award in 1984.

By this time, she had switched her political affiliation from Democrat to Republican. She recalls that in 1976 she voted for Jimmy Carter, a Democrat, in the first Presidential election where she was eligible to vote. But in 1979, when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, she found Carter’s reaction naive. “When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and we decided to boycott the Olympics, President Carter said, ‘Today, I’ve learned more about the Soviet Union than at any other time.’ I remember thinking, What did you think you were dealing with? This is a horrible government — of course they invaded some foreign country! I thought it was time to have a tougher policy toward this repressive regime that fortunately no longer exists. And without changes in U.S. policy, it might have limped along longer.”



Texas governor and presidential candidate George W. Bush meeting with Rice at the governor's mansion, December 6, 2000.

Her Republican convictions became even stronger during the 1984 presidential race. When she watched the Democratic Convention, she objected to their appeal to "women, minorities, and the poor, which basically means helpless people and the poor." She thought it was patronizing, and it made her furious.

In 1986, Rice met retired General Brent Scowcroft, who had been the National Security Advisor for President Gerald Ford during the 1970s. Rice met Scowcroft when he came to speak at Stanford. Later, at a dinner attended by what Scowcroft calls "some of the best brains in the business," Rice asked a question involving international politics and law. "Here was this slip of a girl," he recalls. "And she spoke up. She wasn't cowed by the company she was in. And she made sense. I thought I better get to know her."

Rice's first extended stay in Washington came in 1986, when she received a fellowship with the Council on Foreign Relations. She worked on nuclear strategic planning under the direction of Admiral William Crowe. After the fellowship, she returned to Stanford, where she taught until 1988. At that

point General Scowcroft was named National Security Advisor in the administration of George Bush, our 41st president, who was elected to office in 1988 and served one four-year term. Scowcroft says that after being named National Security Advisor, "one of my first calls was to Condi Rice." He offered her the position of director of Soviet affairs at the National Security Council. She took a leave of absence from Stanford and spent the next two years serving in the administration of President George Bush. (For more information on Bush, see *Biography Today*, Jan. 1992.)

The National Security Council

Rice's title was director of Soviet and East European affairs with the National Security Council (NSC). The NSC is the President's principal forum for considering issues of national security and foreign policy. It was first founded under President Harry Truman in the late 1940s. Chaired by the President, the group includes the Vice President and the Secretaries of State and Defense. In addition, other members of the President's staff and Cabinet attend its meetings, including the National Security Advisor, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Secretary of the Treasury, the United Nations Representative from the U.S., the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, and the President's Chief of Staff.

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Rice met the retired general and former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft when he came to speak at Stanford. Later, at a dinner attended by what he called "some of the best brains in the business," Rice asked a question involving international politics and law. "Here was this slip of a girl," he recalled. "And she spoke up. She wasn't cowed by the company she was in. And she made sense. I thought I better get to know her."

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After several months Rice was appointed special assistant to the President for national security affairs and senior director for Soviet affairs at the NSC. During her two years at the White House, she helped bring economic and political reform to former communist East European countries, including Poland, and to craft the U.S. foreign policy toward the Soviet Union.

Rice was a senior foreign policy advisor at a time of unprecedented change in the world. At the end of World War II in 1945, two main superpowers emerged in world politics: the United States and the Soviet Union (the full

name of the Soviet Union was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or U.S.S.R.). For the next 45 years, throughout what is known as the Cold War, the world was divided into two "spheres of influence." One sphere was dominated by the democratic United States and included its allies, and the other sphere was dominated by the communist Soviet Union and included its allies. The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. each had huge arsenals of nuclear power capable of destroying much of the world. As a distinguished specialist in the area of arms control and the Soviet Union, Rice emerged as one of President George Bush's most important advisors.

In the late 1980s, the Soviet Union began to collapse. As it weakened, many of its allies, the nations of Eastern Europe, abandoned communism and looked to the United States to help them form free, independent democracies. The leader of the Soviet Union at that time was Mikhail Gorbachev, and Bush introduced Rice to the Soviet leader saying, "She tells me everything I know about the Soviet Union." Rice's influence didn't stop at the policy table. Once, while Gorbachev was still in power, Boris Yeltsin, then head of the reform movement in the Soviet Union, arrived at the White House and tried to get into the Oval Office to meet with President Bush. "He got in the West Wing basement," recalls former Director of the CIA, Robert Gates. "And he refused to move without a promise that he was going to see President Bush. Condi took him by the elbow and in Russian lectured him that he'd been given an appointment with General Scowcroft and that was who he was going to see." "Not even Boris Yeltsin intimidates Condi," said Gates.

Returning to Stanford — and Becoming Provost

After two years in the Bush administration, Rice returned to Stanford. "I was tired," she recalls. "I was starting to experience something that I think government officials should be aware of. You work so hard and you're so invested in what you're doing that it's hard to see new perspectives. It's hard to have new ideas." In returning to Stanford, she rediscovered the piano. She even began to play small chamber concerts with other faculty.

Two years after her return to Stanford, Rice was named Provost of the university. A Provost is second only to the President of a university in terms of power and authority for financial and academic affairs. Rice was the youngest Provost in the history of the university, as well as the first woman and the first African-American in that position. As Provost, she was in charge of an annual budget of \$1.3 billion dollars a year and oversaw major academic changes, including a revamping of the undergraduate degree program.



Rice meeting with President George W. Bush and Chief of Staff Andrew Card at the president's ranch in Texas, February 17, 2001.

As Provost, Rice often had to make difficult and unpopular decisions. The University was running a deficit of \$43 million when she took over, and she made deep cuts in programs and laid off faculty. According to Coit Blacker, a colleague at Stanford, "Condi was not running any popularity contest. She was effective as Provost because of her ability to make tough decisions and stick to them even if they made people unhappy." Another controversial stance involved affirmative action. While she supported affirmative action in recruiting junior members of the faculty, she didn't believe that Stanford should use quotas in making decisions about who remained as full-time, tenured professors. According to Blacker, "In her judgment, you did everything possible to attract a diverse group, but you hold them to the highest standard when they come up for tenure."

While working as Provost, Rice also started an after-school program for kids in East Palo Alto, a city close to Stanford that is mostly black and poor. Called the Center for a New Generation, the program offers enrichment classes for kids in third through eighth grade whose own schools don't offer classes that challenge them. "Ever since I've been out of school, most of my efforts outside work have dealt with trying to give kids an opportunity," she says.

Leaving Stanford to Campaign with George W. Bush

In 1999, Rice made the decision to leave academics for politics again. Rice had grown close to George and Barbara Bush when she served in his administration. Through them she had met George W. Bush, the son of the 41st President. Because of the confusion caused by their similar names, the son is sometimes called George W. (For more information on George W. Bush, see *Biography Today*, Sep. 2000, and Update in the Annual Cumulations for 2000 and 2001.)

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In announcing Rice's nomination as National Security Advisor, George W. Bush said, "Dr. Rice is not only a brilliant person, she is an experienced person. She is a good manager. I trust her judgment."

Rice responded by saying that she was "absolutely delighted and indeed honored—in fact humbled—that President-elect Bush has asked me to serve as his National Security Advisor."

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In 1999, George W. was Governor of Texas and contemplating running for President. He needed a foreign policy advisor, and Rice became the coordinator of his foreign policy team. She also served as co-campaign manager for California, while she traveled with Bush and gave him advice on foreign policy.

In a speech to the 2000 Republican Convention that nominated George W. Bush for the presidency, she talked about her political views and told a story about her father. In the South during Jim Crow, the Democrats controlled nearly all the local, state, and federal offices, and the party employed racist rules that denied blacks the right to vote. For example, John Rice was asked to guess the number of jelly beans in a jar as an "eligibility test" to determine whether or not he could vote. "Democrats in Jim Crow Alabama of 1952 would not register him to vote," she said. "The Republicans did. My father has never forgotten that day, and neither have I."

Rice was a very visible and vocal member of the Bush campaign. She spoke easily and comfortably with reporters and she worked with the candidate to prepare for speeches and debates. The election of 2000 turned out to be one of the most controversial in the nation's history, and also one of the most protracted. Finally, five weeks after the election, George W. Bush was declared President. One of his first acts was to name Condoleezza Rice as his National Security Advisor.

Becoming National Security Advisor

In announcing Rice's nomination as National Security Advisor, Bush said, "Dr. Rice is not only a brilliant person, she is an experienced person. She is a good manager. I trust her judgment. Americans will find that she is a wise person." Rice responded by saying that she was "absolutely delighted and indeed honored—in fact humbled—that President-elect Bush has asked me to serve as his National Security Advisor." She said of her new boss, "He is a man of tremendously good judgment, with strong values and principles." She is very close to President Bush, whom she describes as, "really smart—and he's also disciplined, which I admire. He's tough, calm, and even keeled." They also share a love of sports and exercise, and a deep commitment to family and faith.

As National Security Advisor, Rice is the chief consultant to the President on foreign policy. In her first months in the job, Rice returned to Poland, where she had helped the fledgling democracy establish economic and political policies in the final days of Soviet influence. In the summer of 2001, she traveled to Moscow, where she met with Russian President Alexander Putin. They discussed two areas of concern to both Russia and the U.S., arms control and missile defense systems. But just eight months into her new position Condoleezza Rice faced a challenge unimaginable until that date.

A Terrorist Attack

On September 11, 2001, terrorists attacked the United States. That morning, hijackers forced two commercial airplanes to crash into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. Less than an hour later, hijackers forced a plane to crash into the Pentagon, the home of the Department of Defense in Washington, D.C. Later, it was learned that there were also terrorists on board a fourth plane. But passengers on that plane fought back and prevented the terrorists from carrying out their plans. The plane crashed in an empty field in Pennsylvania without hitting any other inhabited area or symbolic buildings. It was later conjectured that the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania was headed to another target in Washington, possibly the U.S. Capitol building or the White House.

Rice, who was in her office in the White House when the attack began, recalls what happened. "I was at my desk in the White House at around 8:45 when my executive assistant came in and said a plane had hit the World Trade Center. I thought, 'What a strange accident.'" President Bush was in Florida, so she called him and said, "'Mr. President, a plane hit the World Trade Center.' And he said 'What a weird accident.' Around nine, after I



In this meeting in the Oval Office, CIA Director George Tenet (left) is speaking to Vice President Dick Cheney, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, and President George W. Bush, after Bush has informed the nation that air strikes were made against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

went to a staff meeting, my assistant handed me a paper that said a second plane had hit the World Trade Center, and I thought, 'My God, this is a terrorist attack.'"

Next, Rice called a meeting of the National Security Council. But Secretary of State Colin Powell was out of the country. "I remember thinking, 'Is he in danger?'" said Rice. "Then I turned to see a television report of a plane hitting the Pentagon." Rice had to move to a secure location. "Someone came up and said, 'Get to the bunker. The Vice President is already there.' Before I left, I talked to the President again about whether he would come back to the White House. We didn't want him to because Washington was under attack. When I got to the bunker, it occurred to me to call my aunt and uncle in Birmingham and say, 'Tell everybody I'm okay.' Then I began calling other governments to make sure they knew the U.S. government

was up and running, and I began tracking plane tail numbers so we could ground civil aviation.”

The damage to the World Trade Center was devastating. An hour after the attack, the twin towers collapsed. Almost 3,000 people were presumed dead in New York. At the Pentagon, the death toll reached 184. All the passengers on four airliners taken by the hijackers were killed in the crash.

Responding to the Crisis

Within hours of the attack, federal officials stated that they thought the terrorists were acting under the direction of Osama bin Laden. (For more information on bin Laden, see the entry in this issue of *Biography Today*). Bin Laden is a Saudi Arabian extremist who has been linked to other terrorist attacks against the U.S. He is reported to have financed and planned several previous attacks on American targets: the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center, which killed six and injured several hundred; the 1998 bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; and the 2000 attack on the U.S.S. Cole, a Navy ship bombed in a harbor in Yemen. Throughout the fall of 2001, the U.S. military pursued bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network of terrorists in Afghanistan, bombing Al Qaeda targets, including training areas for terrorists. As of this writing, bin Laden’s whereabouts are unknown, but the U.S. continues to pursue him and the worldwide terrorist network.

In her role as National Security Advisor, Rice has played a pivotal role in determining U.S. policy after the attack. Together with the President, the Cabinet, and military officials, she has helped forge America’s response to terrorist activity. In addition, she has emerged as an articulate, composed spokesperson for the administration, offering a calming presence to the

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After the attacks, Rice held a press briefing to delineate the President’s address to the nation, which he gave on September 20. “I think that every American understands that life changed on September 11. . . . What the President will do tomorrow is to use the opportunity to talk to the American people about the kind of threat we face. He would ‘urge patience and reason, and demonstrate that his resolve is going to be over a long period of time.’ I think everybody understood that this was not just an attack on America, this was an attack on freedom.”

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Rice once compared the U.S. response to the September terrorist attacks with Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, which led America into World War II. "In that case, we had a country with a capital, with marching armies and beaches to storm, and islands to take. That is not the nature of this war. There will be, undoubtedly, some things that our military forces and the military forces of others can do. But this is also a war of will and mind. It is a war in which information may be the most important asset that we have."

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things that our military forces and the military forces of others can do. But this is also a war of will and mind. It is a war in which information may be the most important asset that we have."

President Bush has told the American people that the war will be long, and unlike any the U.S. has fought before. The ultimate aim is to "defeat the global terror network," he has said. Since September 11, the U.S. has focused its military actions on finding and destroying Al Qaeda terrorist cells throughout Afghanistan, the Middle East, Asia, and all over the world.

Rice continues in her crucial role as one of President's most trusted advisors. In the months to come, she will continue to provide advice as the U.S. pursues a difficult, elusive, and deadly enemy.

nation in its time of need. She has often appeared at press briefings to outline policy and answer questions.

For example, after the attacks, Rice held a press briefing to delineate the President's address to the nation, which he gave on September 20. "I think that every American understands that life changed on September 11," she said. She talked about the key points Bush would raise in his speech. "What the President will do tomorrow is to use the opportunity to talk to the American people about the kind of threat we face," she said. He would "urge patience and reason, and demonstrate that his resolve is going to be over a long period of time." Rice also said that "I think everybody understood that this was not just an attack on America, this was an attack on freedom." She was asked to compare the U.S. response to the attack with Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, which led America into World War II. "In that case, we had a country with a capital, with marching armies and beaches to storm, and islands to take. That is not the nature of this war. There will be, undoubtedly, some



Rice talking to reporters in the White House briefing room, November 8, 2001.

HOME AND FAMILY

Rice, who is single, lives in an apartment in the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C., just minutes from the White House. Her mother, Angelena Rice, died of breast cancer in 1985. John Rice remarried and moved to Palo Alto, where he spent a lot of time with his daughter, whom he always called "little star," until his death from heart disease in December 2000. Rice remains very close to her extended family, including aunts, uncles, and cousins, and she spends time with them whenever possible.

Rice is deeply religious. Of her faith, she says, "It's so organic to me. . . . It's very deeply who I am. I actually think it gives you a kind of optimism, a sense that you're not the most important being on earth or in heaven. I think it leaves you feeling supported and not alone."

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

Rice enjoys many activities in her limited spare time. She still plays the piano, and has a baby grand in her apartment. Like President Bush, she is devoted to exercise. "Exercise is a very high priority for me," she says. "I do some of my best thinking on the treadmill." In fact, she and Bush once did a briefing while she ran on a treadmill. She also loves to play tennis. After her years at Stanford, she became a devoted fan of the school teams. She loves football especially, both college and pro. "I find football so interesting strategically," she says. "It's the closest thing to war. What you're really doing is taking and yielding territory, and you have certain strategies and tactics." She's even joked that she'd love to be the commissioner of the National Football League someday.

Rice admits that she also loves to shop. "I can get lost in a store for hours," she claims. She loves to buy clothes and shoes. "Love the shoes!"

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Uncertain Allegiance: The Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Army: 1948-1983, 1985

The Gorbachev Era, 1986 (with Alexander Dallin)

Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft, 1996 (with Philip Zelikow)

HONORS AND AWARDS

Walter J. Gores Award for Excellence in Teaching (Stanford University): 1984

Dean's Award for Distinguished Teaching (Stanford University School of Humanities and Sciences): 1993

Inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences: 1997

President's Award (NAACP): 2002

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Contemporary Black Biography, Vol. 28, 2001

Notable Black American Women, 1996

Who's Who among African Americans, 2001

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Vogue, Oct. 2001, p.396
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WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/>
<http://www-hoover.stanford.edu/bios/rice.html>



Marla Runyan 1969-

American Track and Field Runner

First Legally Blind Athlete to Compete in the
Olympic Games

BIRTH

Marla Runyan was born on January 4, 1969, in Santa Maria, California. Her father, Gary Runyan, was a banker, and her mother, Valerie (Rankin) Runyan, was a music teacher. Marla has a brother, Grady, who is two years older. Although she is currently legally blind, Runyan was born with normal sight.

YOUTH

Runyan grew up in Camarillo, California, a wealthy suburb of Los Angeles. She was an active and independent-minded child. According to her family, her first words as a toddler were "I wanna do." Throughout her early school years, Runyan was a top student and a good athlete. She loved sports and participated in gymnastics, swimming, and soccer.

Runyan first began experiencing problems with her vision when she was nine years old. Her fourth-grade teacher noticed that she had trouble seeing the chalkboard and held her textbooks close to her face. The young girl also complained of pain in her eyes and headaches caused by bright lights. Thinking that she simply needed eyeglasses, her parents took her to an optometrist to have her vision checked. But this first doctor—as well as several others who examined her later—had trouble figuring out what was wrong. In fact, one doctor suggested that Runyan was just pretending that she could not see in order to get attention. This situation was very frustrating and stressful for Runyan and her family.

Finally, when Runyan was 11, she was diagnosed with Stargardt's disease. "One spring, I could read my grade-school textbooks, and the next autumn, I couldn't," she recalled. "After various misdiagnoses and other misadventures in several optometrists' chairs, I learned that I had Stargardt's disease, a degenerative ailment that essentially leaves holes in the delicate, light-sensitive membrane in the back of your eyes that absorbs and translates images."

Stargardt's disease is a hereditary condition that usually affects children between the ages of 7 and 12. It is a form of macular degeneration, which is the most common cause of blindness in the United States. The light-sensitive membrane in the back of the eye is called the retina. The macula is a group of sensor cells in the center of the retina that allows people to see

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fine details. When the macula degenerates, or stops functioning normally, it creates a "hole" in the middle of the field of vision. Although most people with Stargardt's disease retain some degree of sight, there is no cure and the effects are irreversible.

Losing Her Vision

Runyan suffered gradual vision loss throughout her teen years. Although she still had some peripheral vision, meaning that she could see out of the corners of her eyes, she could not see things that were directly in front of her. In fact, her vision deteriorated so badly that she was classified as "legally blind." "If you take a vision test and you are only able to see the 'big E' on the eye chart WITH your glasses or contacts, then your acuity [sharpness of perception] is 20/200. This measurement is the defining measurement of 'legally blind,'" she explained. "My visual acuity is 20/400 in the right eye and 20/300 in the left. I can no longer make out the 'big E.'"

By the time her vision stabilized, Runyan could no longer recognize people standing a few feet away from her, and she was unable to read anything but extremely large type. "Here's what I do see: a permanent blot in front of my eyes," she noted. "It is a large oval that blinks and flickers like a strobe light. It has no particular color or definition but moves across walls and ceilings

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and blue skies like a gray stain. Imagine if someone took a picture and the flash got in your eyes. For a few moments, you'd see a purplish or gray splotch, and no matter how hard you tried to look around it, it would still be there, right in the center. In a few minutes it would fade away and the world around you would appear normal again. For me, it stays."

Runyan was determined to live a normal life despite her loss of vision. She managed to get around fairly well by herself using her peripheral vision. She also continued participating in sports. "I loved to play sports because I felt I could be more like everybody else," she stated. "Actually, I felt I could be even better than everybody else." Runyan continued playing soccer until the age of 14, when she

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could no longer follow the ball. Then she began competing in track and field.

Runyan's parents were devastated by what was happening to their daughter, but they supported her efforts to live a normal life and did not place restrictions on her. For example, they allowed her to ride her bicycle to a nearby fast-food restaurant even after she had been classified as "legally blind." "If we ever did anything for Marla, it was not sheltering her or protecting her," her father noted. "Just the opposite. If she wanted to do something, we said, 'Go for it.' That way she could find her own barriers."

EDUCATION

Runyan attended El Descanso Elementary School in Camarillo until her vision began failing. Then she transferred to Williams Elementary in Hueneme, an hour away from home, because it had a special program for visually impaired children. Although the program helped her keep up with her classmates, Runyan resented the fact that she was considered "special." She especially hated riding the bus for handicapped children. "The bus represented stigma [disgrace] to me," she remembered. "It was everything I hated about my impairment. Too often, others equated being impaired with being dumb. Just because I couldn't see something, people assumed I couldn't read. It was an automatic equation: if you can't read, you're stupid. I knew otherwise. Yes, academics were more difficult for me, but only because every task took longer."

Runyan used a number of aids to help her complete her schoolwork. For example, she used a large magnifying lens—sort of like a small telescope—to help her see the chalkboard. She also placed her textbooks

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"Here's what I do see: a permanent blot in front of my eyes. It is a large oval that blinks and flickers like a strobe light. It has no particular color or definition but moves across walls and ceilings and blue skies like a gray stain. Imagine if someone took a picture and the flash got in your eyes. For a few moments, you'd see a purplish or gray splotch, and no matter how hard you tried to look around it, it would still be there, right in the center. In a few minutes it would fade away and the world around you would appear normal again.

For me, it stays."

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Runyan (#1041, at left) competing in the finals of the 1500 meters at the World Track and Field Championships on August 29, 1999.

under a special device that magnified the letters and showed them on a closed-circuit television screen.

After graduating from Williams Elementary, Runyan attended E.O. Green Junior High in Hueneme. She credits one of her teachers there, John O’Looney, with convincing her to go out for the track team when she reached high school. At Camarillo High School, Runyan competed in sprint races and the high jump. Her father supported her athletic pursuits by building a high-jump pit in the backyard so that she could practice. Despite the fact that she could barely see the bar she had to jump over, she cleared an impressive 5 feet, 7 inches during her high school career. Runyan also excelled academically at Camarillo High, graduating in 1987 with a 3.98 grade point average.

College Years

Upon completing high school, Runyan went on to attend San Diego State University (SDSU). The track coach at SDSU invited her to join the team, although she did not receive an athletic scholarship. At the college level, Runyan competed in the heptathlon, which consists of seven events: high jump, long jump, 800 meters, 200 meters, 100-meter hurdles, shot put, and javelin throw. She was ranked in the top 10 nationally during her junior and senior years, and she finished second at the 1991 Western Athletic Conference finals.

Runyan became a top heptathlete despite her visual impairment. “I don’t really think about it anymore. It is a part of my lifestyle. I have learned to adapt and use visual aids if I need to. I have learned to train and race as a person who is legally blind. I don’t know anything different,” she stated. “My attitude is the whole reason I’m here. It’s how I perceived my vision loss, or maybe I didn’t even perceive it. By ignoring it, or denying it, it allowed me to do everything I wanted.”

Although she could not see the bar in the high jump or the hurdles in the 100 meters, Runyan competed in the events by counting her steps and getting into a rhythm. In the 800 meters, she could not see her competitors to check her position or the scoring clock to check her time. She could not even see the finish line until she was almost on top of it. But she learned to tell the other runners apart by memorizing their uniform colors or hair styles, and she found that she could sense their level of fatigue by listening to the rhythm of their breathing.

At SDSU, Runyan hired fellow students to read to her and take notes for her. She also continued to use special visual-aid devices, like computer

software that magnified words typed on the screen. She graduated from SDSU with honors in 1991, earning a bachelor of science degree in special education. After taking a year off to concentrate on training for the heptathlon, she continued her education at SDSU while also working as a teacher for blind and deaf children in the San Diego public schools. In

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After attending the Olympic trials, Runyan received hundreds of congratulatory letters and e-mail messages, many from visually impaired children who said that her success had inspired them to pursue their dreams. “I had no idea it would reach this many people. In some ways, it makes it more important. My race [at the Olympics] will only last four minutes — hopefully — but I think the difference it could make on people’s lives will last much longer than that. In some ways, it’s equally as important as achieving my Olympic dreams.”

1994, Runyan earned a master’s degree in education of the blind and deaf. She was as proud of this accomplishment as she was of any of her athletic achievements. “It’s a lot easier to run around a track than to get your master’s degree when you can’t see,” she once told her mother.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Winning Gold in the Paralympics

After earning her bachelor’s degree in 1991, Runyan concentrated on athletic training in hopes of making the U.S. Olympic team in the heptathlon. Although she did not qualify for the Olympics, she did compete in the 1992 Paralympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. The Paralympics is an international competition for athletes with disabilities. Competing for the U.S. Association of Blind Athletes, Runyan won gold medals in the 100 meters, 200 meters, 400 meters, and long jump.

Runyan continued training in the heptathlon as she worked on her master’s degree at SDSU. Shortly after earning her degree, she finished ninth in the 1995 U.S. National Track and Field

Championships, which earned her a spot in the Olympic trials for the 1996 Games in Atlanta, Georgia. Unfortunately, Runyan finished tenth at the trials and did not make the U.S. Olympic team. However, she did manage to set a new American heptathlon record in the 800 meters with a time of 2:04.70. This performance convinced Runyan that she had a better chance of making the Olympic team if she concentrated on running instead of the



Runyan (#1041, at left) competing in the finals of the 1500 meters at the World Track and Field Championships on August 29, 1999.

multi-event heptathlon. "It was anticlimactic, but setting that record was crucial," she noted. "It convinced me that I should let go of the heptathlon and concentrate on the 800."

Before giving up the heptathlon, however, Runyan competed in the event one last time at the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta. She won a gold medal and set a world record for points earned in the Paralympic heptathlon. Although Runyan enjoyed participating in the Paralympics, she remained determined to make the U.S. Olympic team. "The Paralympics was a great experience, but my true athletic goals were not going to be met there," she explained. "Even when I was there, my expectations for myself were on the Olympics."

In 1997, Runyan moved to Eugene, Oregon, which is a popular training ground for elite American runners. She began to focus her training on middle distances, including the 1500 meters. Unfortunately, she soon suffered a string of injuries that kept her out of competition for nearly two years. During her recovery from one injury, she was referred to Matt Lonergan, a former college track star who was training as a massage therapist. They soon began a romantic relationship and eventually moved in together.

Coming Back from Injury

Runyan finally overcame her injuries and began making a comeback in 1999. She appeared in the U.S. National Track and Field Championships that year and finished fourth in the 1500 meters. Her performance at the Pan Am Games was even more impressive. She kept pace with the favorite, Canada's Leah Pells, throughout the race and won the gold medal in a photo finish. Runyan's victory at the Pan Am Games led to her first major sponsorship—an endorsement contract with Asics, a company that makes sports shoes and clothing. At the 1999 World Track and Field Championships, Runyan finished tenth in the 1500 meters with a time of 4:05.27. It was the 20th-fastest time in the history of the event.

Runyan's success continued in 2000. In March, she won the 3000 meters at the U.S. National Indoor Track and Field Championships with a time of 9:01.29. This triumph gave her confidence that she could make the U.S. Olympic team in the 800, 1500, or 5000 meter events. But then Runyan suffered an injury that threatened her Olympic dreams. On a training run several weeks before the Olympic trials, she strained ligaments in her knee when she jumped to get out of the way of a child on a bicycle. "I was in the best shape, the best fitness of my life," she recalled. "I was getting really confident and maybe a little greedy about the trials. I was actually going to double. I was going to run the 1500 and the 5000. And then, this injury sort of came out of nowhere. I hadn't had an injury problem in two years. The injury, it really humbled me in a big hurry and scared me."

The injury severely limited Runyan's training in the weeks leading up to the competition. In fact, she almost decided that she could not run in the Olympic trials. "Two days before the race, I couldn't run," she stated. "The day of the race, I was able to jog one lap. Then I tried to do one more and I couldn't." But Runyan gathered all her strength in order to compete in the 1500 meters. Her goal was to finish third behind the two favorites, Regina Jacobs and Suzy Favor Hamilton. The top three finishers in the event would earn spots on the U.S. Olympic team for the 2000 Games in Sydney, Australia. During the race, Jacobs and Hamilton took the lead as expected. Runyan moved ahead of the remaining runners on the second-to-last lap and held on for third place with a time of 4:06.44. She had finally achieved her dream of making the Olympic team.

When Runyan returned home from the Olympic trials, she was surprised to find hundreds of congratulatory letters and e-mail messages. Many of the notes came from visually impaired children who said that Runyan's success had inspired them to pursue their dreams. "I had no idea it would reach this many people. In some ways, it makes it more important," she

noted. “My race [at the Olympics] will only last four minutes— hopefully—but I think the difference it could make on people’s lives will last much longer than that. In some ways, it’s equally as important as achieving my Olympic dreams.”

First Blind Athlete to Compete in the Olympics

In the weeks leading up to the Games, Runyan received a great deal of attention from fans and the media as the first legally blind athlete ever to compete in the Olympics. She did not mind the attention, although sometimes she got tired of talking about her vision. “I realize having the media attention helps me get sponsors, and contracts. But at the same time, it was frustrating when the media ignored the athletic achievement and focused only on my vision,” she admitted. “I never really think that much about my vision, certainly not as much as the media does. I just think about my personality and the person I am. I never said to myself: ‘I want to be the first blind Olympian.’ I just said: ‘I want to be an Olympian.’”

When she arrived in Sydney, Runyan had some trouble adjusting to the unfamiliar surroundings. For example, she could not read the signs in the cafeteria of the athletes’ village, so she often ended up with food she did not like. Being in Australia also had some unusual effects on her training.

“One afternoon, Matt and I ran laps around a large grass field behind the practice track,” she remembered. “As we reached one end of the field, suddenly Matt grabbed my arm and yelled, ‘Watch out!’ A three-foot-long iguana was basking in the sun, directly in my path. He had blended in with the sunburned brown and yellow grass, and I would have stepped right on his back if Matt hadn’t grabbed me. We definitely were not in Eugene.”

Still bothered by the lingering effects of her knee injury, Runyan struggled during the series of qualifying heats that cut the original field of 50 runners down to 12 who would compete for a medal in the 1500 meters. She ended up squeaking through to make the finals as the second-slowest qualifier, with a time of 4:06.14. As the final race began, Runyan found herself in the middle of the pack. The leaders set an unusually slow pace, hop-

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Runyan (center) in the semi-finals of the 1500 meters at the Olympics, September 28, 2000.

ing to conserve their strength for a sprint to the finish line. It seemed to Runyan that all of her competitors were trying to hang back and keep an eye on each other.

At this point, Runyan faced a difficult decision. She felt frustrated by the slow, tactical pace of the race, and she knew that she did not have enough speed to win an all-out sprint to the finish. She longed to move to the front of the pack and increase the pace. But she also realized that leading uses up more energy than following. In the heat of the moment, Runyan decided to take control of the race. "It was a very strange, disappointing race. No one wanted to run. No one wanted to take it out," she recalled. "So I dropped back and came around. I wanted to run my own race. I didn't want to sit back and play games and wait for someone to kick. I took the pace out around the second lap, which was suicidal in some ways."

Runyan's family and fans cheered wildly as she took the lead and set the pace for the 1500 meters. But just as she feared, taking the lead had required too much of her energy. Her competitors began passing her on the final lap, and Runyan ended up finishing eighth with a time of 4:08.30. Nouria Merah-Benida of Algeria took the gold, followed by Violeta Szekely

and Gabriela Szabo of Romania. The winning time was more than 11 seconds slower than the Olympic record. Although Runyan was disappointed not to win a medal, she had posted the best finish ever for an American woman in the 1500-meter event. She chose to look at the bright side and use her disappointing finish as a source of motivation. "I think the one positive thing about finishing eighth at the Olympics—what can be more motivating?" she stated. "I mean, if you won the gold medal, where do you go? You don't have anywhere to go from there. But if you finish eighth, you have places to go."

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Continuing Success in 2001

Following the Olympics, Runyan decided to change her emphasis from the 1500 meters to the 5000 meters. She felt that the longer race provided a better fit for her abilities. "I really seem to respond and train well when I focus on strength and stamina," she explained. "I tend to stay healthier and have fewer injuries. I enjoy that kind of training more. And I think the speed I do have will be more effective in the 5000."

In February 2001, Runyan decided to challenge the American indoor record for the 5000 meters. The old record had stood for many years, since the 5000 meters is rarely run indoors, and Runyan felt confident that she could beat it. She arranged for a couple of her fellow runners to help her by setting the pace in the early laps. Then the pacesetters dropped out and Runyan ran by herself for the last few laps. She set a new American indoor record in the 5000 meters at 15:07.33. Her time was more than 15 seconds faster than the old American record, although it was still 20 seconds slower than the world record for the event. Runyan's success in her new event continued in June 2001, when she won the 5000 meters at the U.S. National Outdoor Track and Field Championships with a time of 15:08.03. Runyan is continuing to train for the 5000 meters, and her goal is to earn a medal in that event at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece.

"The truth is, running is the easiest thing I do. To run a race around a perfectly flat and smooth track, in a controlled environment, among a group of familiar people all moving at a similar pace, feels safe to me compared to the effort that I have to put forth, and the menace I confront, in moving through an ordinary day in ordinary life."

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Inspiring Others to Pursue Their Dreams

Despite her remarkable athletic achievements, Runyan still struggles with her visual impairment in her daily life. "The truth is, running is the easiest

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"I feel most blind when I have to read something in a public place. Every printed thing is unreadable and inaccessible to me — unless I have a powerful aid, like an eight-power magnifier or a closed-circuit television, which you can't exactly carry around on errands. Think of all the times in a day when you look at print, from reading the newspapers in the morning, to scanning a computer screen, to filling out a job application, to ordering a coffee off the menu at Starbuck's. Now try to go an entire day without reading anything."

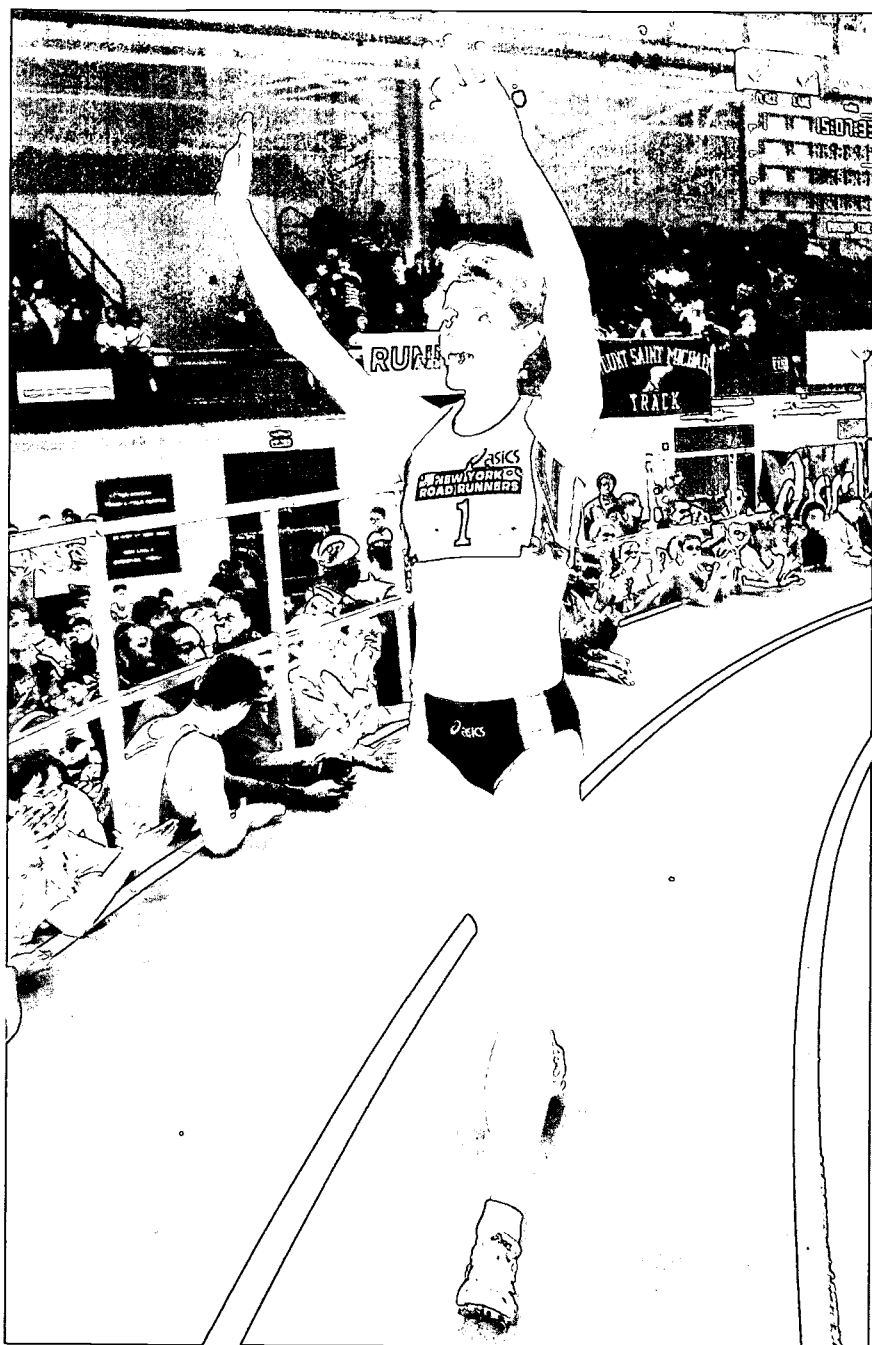
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thing I do," she noted. "To run a race around a perfectly flat and smooth track, in a controlled environment, among a group of familiar people all moving at a similar pace, feels safe to me compared to the effort that I have to put forth, and the menace I confront, in moving through an ordinary day in ordinary life."

Some of the most difficult situations for Runyan are those that other people handle without thinking about it. "I feel most blind when I have to read something in a public place," she explained. "Every printed thing is unreadable and inaccessible to me — unless I have a powerful aid, like an eight-power magnifier or a closed-circuit television, which you can't exactly carry around on errands. Think of all the times in a day when you look at print, from reading the newspapers in the morning, to scanning a computer screen, to filling out a job application, to ordering a coffee off the menu at Starbuck's. Now try to go an entire day without reading anything."

Although everyday life can be a challenge, Runyan overcomes all obstacles with her positive attitude. "What I'm doing is not just an example for people with disabilities, but for everyone," she stated. "There seems to be a

trend in this country where people whine about circumstances that happen to them, but it all comes down to attitude. How you respond is your choice. If I perceive my loss of vision as the end of my 'normal' life, I can live an unhappy life and not aspire to do anything. That's what I think my statement is: 'You have a choice.'"



Runyan celebrates on the track after setting a new American indoor record for the 5000 meters, February 18, 2001.

“*What I’m doing is not just an example for people with disabilities, but for everyone. There seems to be a trend in this country where people whine about circumstances that happen to them, but it all comes down to attitude.*

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I think my statement is:

“You have a choice.”

In the fall of 2001, Runyan published her autobiography, *No Finish Line: My Life as I See It*. She worked with the respected sports journalist Sally Jenkins in writing the book. Critics praised Runyan’s honest, straightforward style and predicted that her life story would serve as an inspiration for many people. For example, a reviewer for *Publishers Weekly* declared that Runyan “presents her story with acuity and grace, rising above expectations and prejudice.”

In her book and in frequent interviews, Runyan advises young people to believe in themselves and go after their dreams. “Get out there and enjoy life!” she says. “Play hard but have fun. Don’t allow others to discourage you. Don’t listen to negative influences. Believe in yourself, and show others what you can do.” Runyan recognizes that she serves as a role model for young people, particularly those with disabilities. Even though few people can achieve her level of

athletic success, they can follow her example of working hard to become the best that they can be. “I would like to be remembered as someone who never gave up,” Runyan stated. “I don’t know what my future holds or what medals I might win and what records I might break. No matter what, I hope people will recognize and appreciate the effort I put forth to be the best runner I can.”

HOME AND FAMILY

Runyan lives in Eugene, Oregon, with her boyfriend and coach Matt Lonergan and her golden retriever, Summer. Her home is located on a shady hillside overlooking a pine forest. It is close to running trails, a grocery store, and a bus stop.

Runyan has remained close to her family. She was thankful that her father, mother, and brother all traveled to Australia to see her compete in the

Olympic Games. Sadly, Runyan's mother died after a long battle with ovarian cancer in 2001, just a few days after *No Finish Line* was published.

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

In her spare time, Runyan enjoys hiking, waterskiing, scuba diving, and playing the violin. She also acts as a spokesperson for the LensCrafters Gift of Sight program. Through this program, LensCrafters collects used eyeglasses, including prescription glasses, reading glasses, and sunglasses. The glasses are cleaned, repaired, and taken to developing countries, where they are given to people who need glasses but are not able to afford them. "We take a lot here for granted, but it's amazing that if you can imagine if you wear glasses, trying to go through your daily life without glasses, how different the world is," Runyan stated. "And there are people [whose] quality of life could be so much more improved just by a pair of glasses, and someone right here in the U.S. might actually have those sitting in a drawer."

WRITINGS

No Finish Line: My Life as I See It, 2001 (with Sally Jenkins)

HONORS AND AWARDS

Paralympic Games, 100 meters: gold medal, 1992
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Paralympic Games, 400 meters: gold medal, 1992
Paralympic Games, long jump: gold medal, 1992
Paralympic Games, heptathlon: gold medal, 1996
Pan Am Games, 1500 meters: gold medal, 1999
U.S. Track and Field National Indoor Championships, 3000 meters:
first place, 2000
American Indoor Record, 5000 meters: 2001
U.S. Track and Field National Outdoor Championships, 5,000 meters:
first place, 2001
Helen Keller Achievement Award (American Foundation for the Blind):
2001

FURTHER READING

Books

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Runyan, Marla, with Sally Jenkins. *No Finish Line: My Life as I See It*, 2001

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Runner's World, June 1, 2000, p.90
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Sports Illustrated for Kids, Sep. 2001, p.104
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Ventura County (Calif.) Star, Oct. 26, 2001, p.C1
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Online

Biography Resource Center Online, 2001

ADDRESS

Flynn Sports Management
625-A Hales Chapel Road
Gray, TN 37615

WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

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http://www.usatf.org/athletes/bios/Runyan_Marla.shtml
<http://marla.flynnsports.com>
<http://www.girlpower.gov/girlarea/gpguests/runyan.htm>
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Mattie Stepanek 1990-

American Student and Poet

Author of the Bestselling Poetry Books *Heartsongs* and
Journey through Heartsongs

BIRTH

Matthew Joseph Thaddeus Stepanek — better known as Mattie — was born on July 17, 1990, in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. His father is Greg Stepanek, a maintenance supervisor at a nonprofit food distribution center, and his mother is Jeni Stepanek, who is studying for her doctorate at the University of Maryland and is currently on leave from her part-time job

there as a researcher. Mattie had a sister and two brothers: Katie, who was born in 1985; Stevie, born in 1987; and Jamie, born in 1989. Katie and Stevie died before Mattie was born, and Jamie died in 1993 at the age of four.

YOUTH

Jeni and Greg Stepanek had been through a lot by the time Mattie was born. Their first child, Katie, had problems breathing, digesting food, and regulating her body temperature and blood pressure. She spent her last

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Mattie dictated his first poem to his mother when he was three. He would often look up from whatever he was doing and say, “Mom, write this down, please.” “When he would play,” she recalls, “he would say something so profound that I thought, ‘Oh, I want to put that in my journal.’ I was in awe of some of the things that he was saying.”

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few months on life support at Children’s Hospital in Washington, D.C. and died before she was two years old. At the time of her birth, the doctors told Jeni and Greg that Katie’s condition was extremely rare, although they did not have a name for it. Doctors also said that there was only a one-in-a-million chance that it would happen again. So the Stepaneks decided to have another child.

Their second child, Stevie, was also born with severe brain stem dysfunction, which means that the autonomic (automatic) nervous system, which controls such basic bodily functions as breathing and the beating of the heart, was not working right. Stevie was unable to keep any food down and therefore never got the nutrition his body needed to grow. He had four operations before he was three months old, and he died when he was six

months old. This time, the doctors told Jeni and Greg that if they had another child, it would have a one-in-four chance of being born with the same ailment. Jeni wanted a family so badly that she decided to take the risk.

Their third child, Jamie, was born in 1989 and spent his first few months in the hospital on life support. But the doctors still didn’t know what to call the disease that he and his siblings suffered from. That same year, while still caring for Jamie, Jeni found out she was expecting another child. “He

was the sickest of the four," Jeni Stepanek remembers. But, she adds, "I have come to learn since then that this was a spirit that was meant to be." Although he suffered from the same life-threatening problems as his siblings, Mattie managed to survive infancy. By the time he turned two, the doctors finally knew what was wrong: he had mitochondrial myopathy, a rare form of muscular dystrophy, which is an hereditary disease that is passed from parent to child. Because it interferes with the body's ability to process oxygen, Mattie had to be hooked up to an oxygen tank all the time and to an alarm at night that would go off every time he "forgot" to breathe.

Jeni realized that she had passed this disease on to her children without knowing it. So she began to wonder about the muscle weakness and fatigue she had been experiencing herself in recent months. She had some tests performed, and they revealed that she, too, was suffering from a milder, adult form of the disease. Jamie died when Mattie was three, and soon Jeni herself needed a wheelchair.

Jeni started reading poetry to Mattie when he was just a baby. Long before he was old enough to hold a pen he was composing his own poems. He dictated his first poem to his mother when he was three, and Jeni Stepanek says that it was about his older brother Jamie, who was dying at the time. He would often look up from whatever he was doing and say, "Mom, write this down, please." "When he would play," Jeni recalls, "he would say something so profound that I thought, 'Oh, I want to put that in my journal.' I was in awe of some of the things that he was saying." When she asked him where these thoughts were coming from, he explained, "God, Jamie, Katie, and Stevie put ideas in my heart. Then it goes all the way up to my head and to my mouth. I let it out there."

Mattie was writing the words down himself by the time he was four, and at age eight he was typing his own poems and reading all the poetry he could find. He especially enjoyed the work of Robert Frost, Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes, and Emily Dickinson. He was small for his age and still needed an oxygen tank and a wheelchair, but he had already lived much longer than his three siblings and achieved more than anyone had expected.

EDUCATION

Although Mattie started out attending Mattaponi Elementary School, it was clear from the start that he was way ahead of his classmates. His first grade teacher remembers him using words like "ebullient" when most of his classmates were learning how to spell "cat" and "dog." In March 1996 he entered a collection of his poems in a contest at his school, and it was selected to compete at the county level against books written by much

older students. After he skipped two grades, Mattie's mother decided he should be home-schooled. By the age of 11, he was studying at the high school level and was even taking courses at a community college.

Mattie likes home schooling and thinks it is the right choice. "A lot of people think I am a genius, but I'm not," he says. "I am very smart, but I have to work very hard and study. I like to read and I am very gifted with writing and philosophy and thinking. But I am not like some kids, who don't have to study, or who remember everything as soon as they see it. I work hard,

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"Heartsong" is a word Mattie invented when he was only four. "Shh!" he told his mother when he was little.

"Listen! That's my heartsong!" Now he found himself explaining to reporters, "Your heartsong is your inner beauty. It's the song in your heart that wants you to help make yourself a better person, and to help other people do the same. Everyone has one."

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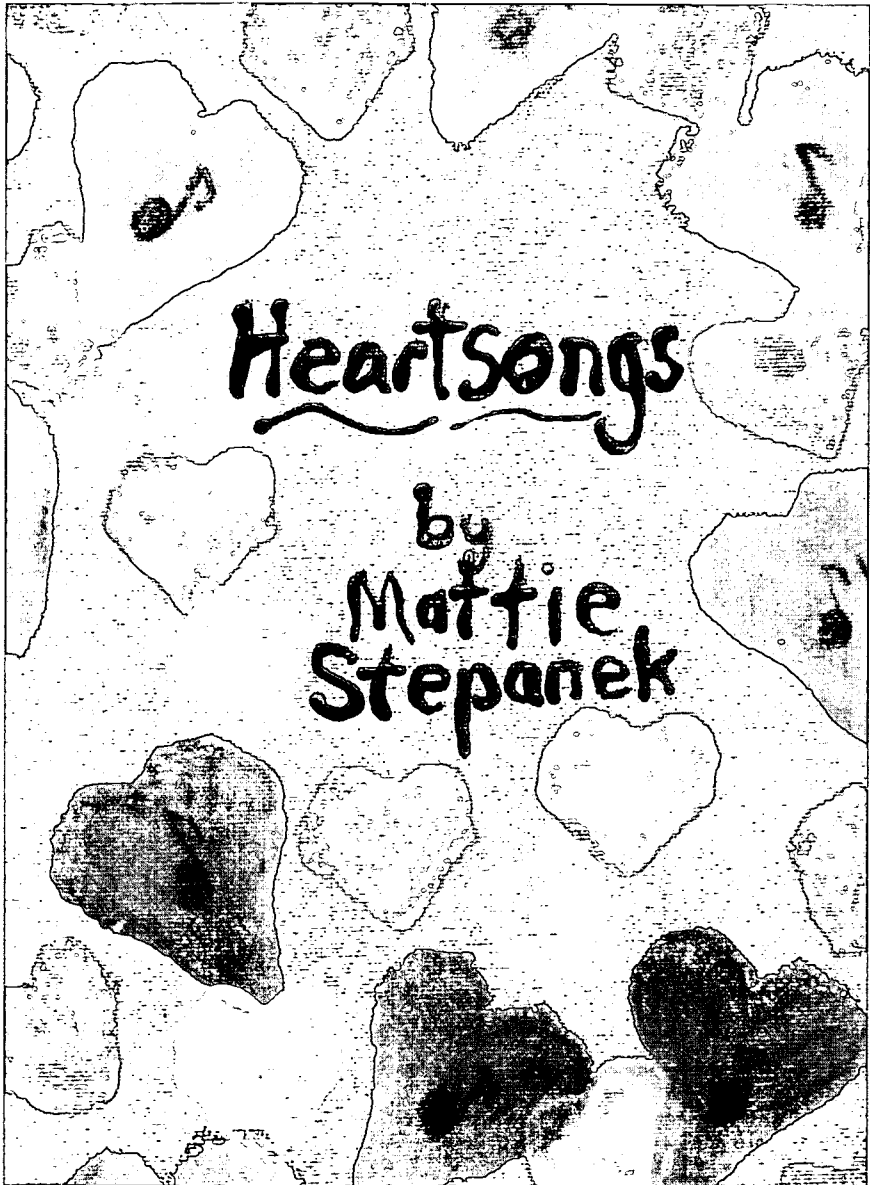
and sometimes I get frustrated." His favorite subjects are literature and American history. Math and science are among his least favorite, although he admits he's pretty good at math.

BECOMING A POET

Three Wishes

In the spring of 2001 Mattie had a health crisis that sent him to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Children's National Medical Center in Washington for five months. He was in a coma for a long while, and the doctors were not sure whether he would ever come out of it. At one point, he was so close to dying that he saw angels. But then he woke up. "It was upsetting to be thrown out of heaven because it was such a wonderful place and once you're there, you don't want to leave," he later told his mother.

At that point, hospital officials knew that Mattie might not have much time left. A woman from the hospital's public relations department asked him what three wishes he would make if he recovered. He said that he wanted to speak to former president Jimmy Carter, that he wanted to see his poetry published, and that he wanted to bring a message of peace to people by appearing on "The Oprah Winfrey Show." The public relations staff decided to help grant his wishes, and the doctors urged them not to waste any time because there was no telling how much longer Mattie would survive.



The first wish was granted when Jimmy Carter called Mattie in his hospital room. Mattie had idolized the former president for his work as a peace-maker, and they talked for 15 minutes about how peace could be achieved in places like Bosnia and Africa.

Heartsongs

The same woman at the hospital who arranged the phone call from Jimmy Carter wanted to put together a collection of Mattie's poems. So she contacted Cheryl Barnes of VSP Books, a small publisher of mostly children's books. When Barnes and her husband came to the hospital to meet Mattie and read his poetry, she soon realized that this was "no little kid with cute little poems. We couldn't believe what we were reading."

Knowing that there might be no time to waste, Barnes published 200 copies of Mattie's book, a paperback called *Heartsongs*, and brought them to the hospital five days later. The hospital held a book party for him, and all 200 copies were sold in a matter of minutes. Barnes said she would print another 500, and after a news conference promoting the book and a TV interview with Mattie, the orders started pouring in.

"Heartsong" was a word Mattie had invented when he was only four. "Shh!" he told his mother when he was little. "Listen! That's my heartsong!" Now he found himself explaining to reporters, "Your heartsong is your inner beauty. It's the song in your heart that wants you to help make yourself a better person, and to help other people do the same. Everyone has one."

Soon after his second wish came true and *Heartsongs* was published, the hospital prepared to let Mattie go home and enjoy whatever time he had left. Then the bleeding in his air passages miraculously stopped. Little by little, he started getting better.

Journey through Heartsongs

Meanwhile, VSP Books was getting ready to publish Mattie's second book, *Journey through Heartsongs*, a hardcover with an introduction written by Jimmy Carter. This book sold more than 30,000 copies—in contrast to most books of poetry, which rarely sell more than 1,000 copies. While *Heartsongs* had poems Mattie had written between the ages of three and seven, this new book featured more recent work, including one called "Future Echo," which describes what it is like living with his disease: "When I swing/ I go everywhere,/ And yet,/ Nowhere at all./ It's like being/ In the middle/ Of an echo/ That hasn't left me yet,/ And so/ It hasn't come back./ I am between/ Yesterday and tomorrow,/ But still in my life of now." In another poem he describes himself as "the left-over child,/ All alone with the parents of dead children." In "About Watches," he says that he likes to wear lots of wristwatches because "It's like having/ All the time/ In the world."

These are clearly not typical children's poems, and they reflect Mattie's familiarity with illness and death as well as his unique perspective on life. Unlike most young writers, he understands that what he does with his life now will affect what happens and how he is remembered after he dies. Perhaps for this reason, his poems speak more directly to adults than to children. Although many of the poems focus on the physical and emotional challenges of living with a terminal disease, he also writes about subjects more typical of his age group, such as rainbows, sunsets, and getting on the school bus. Many of his poems are about Jamie, the brother who died when Mattie was very young, and his other two siblings. In "Unanswered Questions," Mattie wonders whether Jamie died because "I didn't hold his hand tight enough."

Appearing on "Oprah"

After the *Washington Post* ran an article about Mattie saying that he wanted to be on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," it was only a matter of time before his third wish was granted. He appeared on the show October 19, 2001, and the audience gave him a standing ovation. He recited the title poem from *Heartsongs* and explained that he wanted to inspire people all over the world to listen to their heartsongs and stop fighting. When Oprah asked him how he decided on his three wishes, he said, "Because they were things that would last forever. Going to Disney world ends in a week. But being able to talk with Jimmy Carter, being able to have my books published, being able to talk to you here today, lasts forever."

Following Mattie's appearance on "Oprah," *Journey through Heartsongs* appeared on the *New York Times* best seller list. He was interviewed on National Public Radio, "Good Morning, America," and for *People* magazine.

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Mattie's poems have a message that seems particularly appropriate in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. "Bad things like what just happened in New York, sad things like losing a family member or a best friend—these are life storms. After we get through them, instead of just mourning and being all sad, and waiting for the next one to come and blow us away, we should celebrate that we got through it together. If you live in the darkness of the moment, you're not really living."

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Mattie is shown here at his home on November 5, 2001.

By January 2002 *Heartsongs* was number three on the paperback best seller list and *Journey through Heartsongs* was number one, outselling even the latest *Harry Potter* book. There are currently more than a half million copies of the two books in print.

Mattie's "Life Storms"

Mattie's poems have a message that seems particularly appropriate in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. "Bad things like what just happened in New York, sad things like losing a family member or a best friend — these are life storms," he explains. "After we get through them, instead of just mourning and being all

sad, and waiting for the next one to come and blow us away, we should celebrate that we got through it together." He adds, "If you live in the darkness of the moment, you're not really living." It is a philosophy that Mattie has used to get through his own "life storms."

There is no denying that the national tragedy has boosted sales of Mattie's books, as more and more people turn to poetry for comfort. Last Christmas, people were buying five or six copies at a time and giving them as gifts. According to Cheryl Barnes, his publisher, "People are saying, 'If this child can have this type of spirit in the position he's in, we can get through this.'" Added Chris Cuomo, who interviewed Mattie for "Good Morning America," "There's something about Mattie, about the life he's been given and about the words he writes. He gently coaxes people to believe in things they may have forgotten."

Current and Future Projects

Mattie, who has written more than 2,000 poems, recently signed a contract with Hyperion, a New York-based publisher owned by Disney, to put together three more books: *Hope through Heartsongs*, with poems on the subject of caring and comfort; *Believing in Heartsongs*, with poems about faith and spirit; and *Heartsongs for All Seasons*, a book of poems and prayers for special occasions. Mattie hopes to hire an agent to help him handle all the requests he is now receiving for book signings and public appearances, and he plans to establish a trust fund with some of the profits from his books to help pay for his medical care. But above all, he wants to continue his work as a peacemaker. "Nowadays we're fighting over little things that in the great scheme of life don't matter," he says. "Violence is not the answer."

As the recently named National Goodwill Ambassador for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Mattie would like to be an inspirational speaker and go on a speaking tour around the country. But all of his future plans depend on his health. As Jeni Stepanek puts it, Mattie does not think of himself as someone who is dying. "It could be one day or one year. We've been given the gift of time. He's spending these days living, not dying."

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HOME AND FAMILY

Jeni and Greg Stepanek divorced in 1996, when Mattie was about six. Mattie lives with his mother in the basement apartment of a family friend, and they have a nurse who comes once a week to help them. They both use wheelchairs to get around, and Mattie must be connected to a ventilator and an oxygen tank wherever he goes.

In one of his poems, "The Holding-On Family," Mattie sums up the importance of his relationship with his mother when he says, "Our family already got enough smaller/ Without Jamie, and Katie and Stevie./ We need to never let go again."

MAJOR INFLUENCES

Mattie continues to admire former president Jimmy Carter, not only for his efforts as a peacemaker but for his humility. He met Carter face-to-face on "Good Morning, America" in December 2001 and continues to stay in touch with him. Carter, in turn, has become a great admirer of Mattie, whom he says has "inspired the whole country."

FAVORITE BOOKS

Mattie's favorite books include *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Color Purple*, *Lord of the Flies*, and the Harry Potter books. He also enjoys the poems of Edna St. Vincent Millay and Thornton Wilder's well-known play, *Our Town*.

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

In addition to writing poetry, Mattie likes to collect rocks and shells and to play with Legos. He earned a black belt in Hapkido, a Korean martial art similar to Tae Kwan Do, before he was confined to a wheelchair by his disease.

WRITINGS

Heartsongs, 2001

Journey through Heartsongs, 2001

HONORS AND AWARDS

Melinda Lawrence International Book Award (Children's Hospice International): 1999, for "inspirational written works"

National Goodwill Ambassador (Muscular Dystrophy Association): 2002

FURTHER READING

Periodicals

New York Times, Nov. 29, 2001, p.E1

People, Jan. 14, 2002, p.5

Publishers Weekly, Nov. 19, 2001, p.28

Sunday Times (London), Jan. 27, 2002

Time for Kids, Jan. 25, 2002, p.7

U.S. News and World Report, Nov. 26, 2001, p.8

USA Today, Dec. 13, 2001, p.D5

Washington Post, June 17, 1996, p.D1; Oct. 20, 2001, p.D1; Nov. 29, 2001,
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Elijah Wood 1981-

American Actor

Plays Frodo in the Fantasy Film Trilogy

The Lord of the Rings

BIRTH

Elijah Jordan Wood was born on January 28, 1981, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He is the son of Warren Wood, a water and air purification systems salesman, and Debbie Wood, a homemaker who now helps to manage her son's career. Elijah's parents once owned a deli in Cedar Rapids, but they sold it when the family moved to Burbank, California, to help Elijah's

career. He has a brother, Zacharia, who is seven years older than Elijah, and a sister, Hannah, who is two years younger.

YOUTH

From the time he was in elementary school, Wood was an entertainer at heart. He loved to sing, dance, and act, and he put these talents to use in his elementary school's musical productions of *The Sound of Music* and *The Wizard of Oz*. His mother believed that her young son was talented. So one day, after seeing some children in a television commercial, she thought that Elijah would enjoy being a professional actor too. But there were no acting schools near their home, so she asked her son if he would like to try modeling. Elijah happily agreed, and his mother enrolled him at Avant Studios in Cedar Rapids. It turned out that modeling would lead him to acting anyway. "When the class went to a convention in L.A. two years later," Wood recalled, "I caught the eye of my future manager, Gary Scalzo. He asked if I'd like to be an actor and had me read a few scenes."

Scalzo was a judge at the convention. Out of the 500 other aspiring actors there the young Wood really stood out in his eyes. "It was only a few days before his eighth birthday when I saw him perform his monologue," Scalzo said. "Elijah's personality is just right for the screen. When he walks in, the whole room lights up." Scalzo talked to Wood's parents about letting their son act, and everyone agreed it would be a terrific opportunity. "A week later," Wood related, "our family moved to L.A. Although Mom had expected me to just do commercials, I auditioned for various things for six weeks and got the Paula Abdul video 'Forever Your Girl.'"

Starting to Act

As a young actor who was considered easy to work with, Wood soon found himself in demand. His first major role was playing Michael Kaye in *Avalon*, the story of Jewish Russian immigrants living in Baltimore during the 1950s and 1960s. Because *Avalon* was nominated for four Oscars, this helped win Wood a lot of attention, which led to more films. Some of his early movies include *Paradise*, *Radio Flyer*, and the Mel Gibson movie *Forever Young*. In all these films he plays young, sensitive, intelligent boys whose lives are complicated by the adults around him. In *Radio Flyer*, for example, Wood plays Mike, whose brother is being abused by their stepfather. In order to escape the stepfather, the boys hatch a plan to turn their Radio Flyer wagon into a machine that can actually fly and take them away from their troubles.



Joseph Mazzello and Wood in a scene from *Radio Flyer*.

Although many of his early films were not blockbusters and were not highly praised by critics, Wood himself won many compliments for his performances. For example, writing in *All Movie Guide*, Rebecca Flint commented on his work in *Paradise*, calling the young actor "one of the best things about the film." Flint also noted that in the 1994 movie *North*, which was panned by reviewers, "practically every bad review contained a positive assessment of Wood's performance." Film directors, too, have had nothing but good things to say about working with him. Jon Avnet, who directed Wood in *The War*, remarked that "his professionalism, his intelligence, and his talent are singular. There's no one like him, period." And director Steve Miner, who worked with him in *Forever Young*, observed that "Elijah seems to have knowledge beyond his years for executing his job."

Wood's mature attitude and professionalism is combined with a seemingly endless reservoir of energy. "Elijah's just a natural," said *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* director Stephen Sommers. "You never get him going over the top. . . . He gets up, takes a deep breath and there's 100% energy. . . . When the camera starts rolling, he's *living* that scene. I'm talking like he's Marlon Brando, but he blew my socks off." Wood has always been full of energy. In fact, he earned the nickname "monkey" when he was a kid be-

cause he's so active. "I'm kind of a monkey," the actor agreed when describing himself. "I like to jump around. I can't sit down. I just have to keep moving. I like moving and running around and having fun." Wood's exuberance has also earned him another nickname, "The Funny," because he likes to do silly things such as talk with a funny voice.

EDUCATION

Once his acting career started to take off, it became difficult for Wood to attend a regular school. Instead, his mother hired a tutor for him and he studied at home or on the set. Some people might think that he missed out on a lot of the fun of being a kid in school, but he doesn't think it's such a bad thing. "There's a cliché on what is normal," Wood has said, "like going to school, having sleepovers with friends. The only thing I'm really missing out on is going to a normal school and being with kids every day. But that's a sacrifice I'm willing to make."

About pursuing a higher education, Wood said, "I definitely want to go to college, but I don't want to quit acting for two or four years, just so I can go to college." He has said he wants to attend college in New York and study English, and he also wants to study more about acting and film.

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CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Unlike many actors who begin their careers as children only to be forgotten as they grow older, Wood has been a survivor in Hollywood. He didn't want to be like other child stars who quickly burn out. "Child acting is a cutthroat world," he acknowledged, "which is pretty frightening and really silly in retrospect." He added, "It is a really difficult world to live in if you don't have a base, if you don't have a strong sense of yourself." Wood says that he has remained grounded because of his supportive family and also

because he has never desired fame and fortune. He once compared himself to the famous child actor Macaulay Culkin, who starred in the comedies *Home Alone* and *Home Alone II*. "I really don't want to become as well-known as Mac," he once said. "He's so well-known that people come up to him all the time. It's kind of an uncomfortable position."

Wood had the chance to perform with Culkin in *The Good Son* (1993), in which Culkin plays Henry, a seemingly innocent boy who in reality has a very evil side. Wood plays Mark, who moves in with his cousin's family

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after his mother dies and his father has to go to Tokyo on business. Henry turns out to have a fascination with death that leads to dangerous—even possibly fatal—mischievous. When Mark tries to tell the adults about this, no one believes him until the chilling climax. "The key to the movie's power," wrote Ty Burr in *Entertainment Weekly*, "is that it stars a young actor with the talent to take us across emotionally raw terrain—but that actor isn't Macaulay. . . . It's Elijah Wood, *The Good Son's* real star, who grabs our sympathy."

Teen Roles

As Wood grew from a child into a teen, he progressed naturally into roles playing teenagers. These parts tended to be more complex, which suited the actor just fine. In *Flipper* (1996), for example, he plays Sandy Ricks, a teen-

ager from the city whose rebellious attitude is a problem for his Uncle Porter. The movie *Flipper*, which was based on the popular television show from the 1960s, tells how Sandy thinks life with his ex-hippie uncle is boring, until he meets a dolphin he names Flipper. Boy and dolphin become best friends, and Sandy learns from this to become a more mature adult. The producer of the film, Perry Katz, said Wood was perfect in the part. "We needed a seasoned young actor who could portray a complicated character," Katz said, and Wood fit the bill. The main reason Wood took the part, however, was not for the acting challenge but for the chance to be with dolphins—Flipper was played by three different dolphins, as well as





A scene from *The Faculty*: Shawn Hatosy (standing), Josh Hartnett (front seat), Laura Harris, Celea Du Vall, and Wood (back seat).

a robotic version. "Working with these dolphins was one of the most rewarding things I ever did," Wood later said.

In 1997 Wood took on his most challenging role yet in the movie *The Ice Storm*. Set in the 1970s, the movie explores sexual relationships among married couples that were unfaithful to each other. Wood plays Mikey Carver, who does some sexual experimentation of his own with a neighborhood girl. The girl is the daughter of the woman Mikey's father is having an affair with. This complicated mess leads to jealousies and tragedy during an ice storm at the film's climax.

The late 1990s saw Wood in some big roles in popular films. In the 1998 big-budget movie *Deep Impact* he plays a high school student who discovers a comet on a collision course with Earth. That same year he starred in his first horror movie, *The Faculty*. This movie is set in a high school where the bodies of the teachers have been taken over by evil aliens. Although the plot uses an old science fiction device, Wood knew it was about more than aliens and heroic teens saving the world. "The whole alien aspect of the movie is kind of a metaphor for the alienation of kids in high school," he explained. The movie did well at the box office, but, more importantly, it led Wood to his biggest acting part yet.



Winning the Role of Frodo

Wood first heard about the auditions for the new fantasy epic *The Lord of the Rings* while he was working on *The Faculty*. A friend on the set recommended that he try out for the role of Frodo, the hobbit hero of the story. Wood had never read the J. R. R. Tolkien trilogy on which the film was based. But he had read *The Hobbit*, the prequel to the books. In fact, *The Hobbit* had been one of his favorite stories, so he decided to make an audition tape for the new film. But first he did research on hobbits, the short, elflike creatures created by Tolkien. "I bought a book about hobbits, and saw what they wore, and went to a costume shop, . . . and got the proper clothing, including Orc armor." Instead of going to a studio to record the audition tape, he took a different approach and filmed his audition in a wooded area of the Hollywood Hills. Then he sent the tape to director Peter Jackson. Impressed with the performance, Jackson cast Wood as Frodo.

The Lord of the Rings

Tolkien's trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* is comprised of three novels: *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King*. The books, which were originally published in the 1950s, have often been called the finest fantasy novels ever written. Set in the mythical world of Middle-

Earth, the story centers on an evil Ring of Power, which must be destroyed before it falls into the hands of the dark wizard Sauron. The only way to destroy the ring, however, is to throw it back into the fire where it was forged: the lava of Mount Doom in the dark lands of Mordor.

The story begins with Bilbo, a hobbit who is celebrating his 111th birthday in the Shire, the hobbits' home in Middle-Earth. As part of an inheritance for his nephew Frodo, Bilbo give him a ring that he had found on an earlier journey. This is the One Ring, the ruler of all the Rings of Power. The Ring was created by Sauron, the Dark Lord, one of the darkest and most sinister powers of Middle-Earth. Sauron had lost the Ring many years before, and

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To audition for the role of Frodo, Wood made a video tape. But instead of recording it in a studio, he filmed his audition in costume in a wooded area of the Hollywood Hills.

"I bought a book about hobbits, and saw what they wore, and went to a costume shop, . . . and got the proper clothing, including Orc armor."

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now he's looking for it. He sends his servants, nine horrible creatures called Ringwraiths. Called the Black Riders of Sauron, these half-ghost, half-horsemen are thoroughly evil. The Ringwraiths are scouring the land for the lost Ring, which they sense is somewhere in the Shire. Meanwhile the Ring itself is dangerous, because it tries to seduce the one who carries it into its wicked world of power and corruption.

The wizard Gandalf the Grey, a friend of Bilbo's, comes to the Shire to help Frodo prepare for a journey. Frodo must take the ring out of the Shire, and he is soon joined by his friend Sam and by his two cousins, Merry and

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“Those furry feet became the bane of our existence,” Wood said about the hobbits’ costumes. “We started at 5:00 AM and had to stand for an hour and a half while they applied them, so we did get tired after a while. My feet were the sweatiest, so it would melt the glue, and they would fall off after a while.”

Pippin. They are threatened along the way, but they are soon joined by Aragorn, a friend of Gandalf's. With difficulty they reach Rivendell, the land of the elves. There, the Council of Elrond meets and decides that the ring must be destroyed. They choose nine members to become the “Fellowship of the Ring”: the wizard Gandalf; the men Aragorn and Boromir; the elf Legolas; the dwarf Gimli; and the hobbits Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin. They pledge to travel to Mordor and cast the Ring into the flames of Mount Doom in order to save Middle-Earth from eternal darkness. Frodo is appointed Ring-Bearer, and he holds the awesome responsibility of carrying the Ring itself. Together, the Fellowship must overcome great obstacles, avoid the horrible Ringwraiths,

and resist the power of the ring. They set out on a terrific journey of action, adventure, and heroism, as the members of the Fellowship are tested to determine their loyalty to their oath and their ability to overcome adversity in all forms.

Going to New Zealand

Instead of filming each of the three parts of *Lord of the Rings* separately, director Peter Jackson ambitiously planned to film them all at the same time. That approach would make it less expensive to complete the filming. But it was also risky. Usually sequels are filmed only when the first film has been very successful. For *Lord of the Rings*, if the first film was a flop, they would



Sean Astin as Sam and Wood as Frodo in The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring.

have already spent money to make the next two movies. For Wood, doing the three movies simultaneously meant that he would have to live in New Zealand, where it was being shot, for 14 months beginning in 1999. "It was the first time I would be away from home for that long," he said, "but 18 [his age when he won the part] is the right age for someone to go out on new adventures."

And what an adventure! "New Zealand is gorgeous," said Wood enthusiastically. "It's so beautiful and with this project we've been able to travel around" and see the sights. The sets themselves were impressive, too. For example, to recreate the Shire, the home of the hobbits, an entire area of farmland was converted to look just like a scene from the books, including hobbit holes and fantastic landscaping.

Challenges of Playing a Hobbit

In order to look like hobbits, Wood and his three fellow hobbits—played by actors Sean Astin, Dominic Monaghan, and Billy Boyd—had to wear elaborate makeup. The worst part of this was the huge, prosthetic (artificial) feet they had to wear in order to be true to the description of hobbits in Tolkien's books. The actors had to go through hours of makeup to make the feet look right. "Those furry feet became the bane of our existence,"

said Wood. "We started at 5:00 AM and had to stand for an hour and a half while they applied them, so we did get tired after a while. My feet were the sweatiest, so it would melt the glue, and they would fall off after a while."

Hobbits are also much shorter than humans (about three and a half feet tall), and while it helped that Wood only stands five feet, six inches tall, the director and set designers had to be creative to make it look like the human actors were actually little hobbits. Wood sat in oversized chairs, or squatted on his knees while the actors playing humans stood on boxes. Sometimes using inventive camera angles — called "forced perspective" — also gave the illusion that the hobbit actors were very short.

The three films were shot simultaneously, not one at a time. And the scenes were shot out of order, not in the order in which they appear in the finished films. That made it more difficult for the actors. Wood often had to play Frodo in very different ways in the same day, because by the third film, the hobbit is emotionally and physically exhausted. It was difficult, but the actor proved he was up to the challenge. When the first movie was completed, both audiences and actors approved of the results. After seeing the finished film, Wood said, "It was as much a surprise to me as anyone. I had no idea how it would be put together. Peter [Jackson] . . . is a genius."

The Friendship of the Ring

Going through such a big film project together helped Wood form close relationships with his fellow hobbits. "Within the first month," he observed, "we were those characters. We called ourselves the hobbits because we adopted the relationships that were important to those characters." Wood became close to the other actors as well, including Sean Astin as Sam Gamgee; Bill Boyd as Pippin; Dominic Monaghan as Merry; Ian Holm as Bilbo Baggins; Ian McKellen as Gandalf; Viggo Mortensen as Aragorn; Sean Bean as Boromir; Hugo Weaving as Elrond; Orlando Bloom as Legolas; John Rhys-Davies as Gimli; Cate Blanchett as Galadriel; Liv Tyler as Arwen Evenstar; and Christopher Lee as Saruman. "I think that on every film that I've worked on, as a rule the people that you work with become a bit of a second family," Wood said. With *Lord of the Rings*, however, he got to know his co-stars even better because of the time involved. "This makes me look at everything else that I've done and realize that because this is a year of my life and a year spent with these people, they will become even more of a second family to me."

As a symbol of their friendship, all nine actors who comprised the Fellowship of the Ring got identical tattoos. The tattoo, an Elvish symbol for the number nine, represented the nine actors. "All the members got





this tattoo, including Ian McKellen," Wood recalled. "It's a profound experience that needs to be marked." But Wood also got to keep another memento of *The Lord of the Rings*—the ring itself. "I was given the ring by Peter [Jackson] and his partner Fran when I went to say goodbye to them at the airport leaving New Zealand. They said they had a gift for me, handed me the box, and there was a little pouch with the ring inside it. It was very sweet."

Response to the Film

Whenever a book is adapted into a film, the book's fans have certain expectations that they hope the film will meet. This is especially true of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Considered one of the greatest works of fantasy ever written, the *Lord of the Rings* has had a huge following of devoted readers since the 1960s. When Tolkien fans first heard that an ambitious film project was planned, many were excited, but many others were skeptical because they had been disappointed by previous attempts to adapt the books.

But once the new movie was released in December 2001, critics and audiences alike recognized it as an outstanding effort. Director Peter Jackson remained very faithful to Tolkien's original story, which appealed to the author's fans. Yet the movie also captured the visual excitement of mythical Middle-Earth, which appealed to those who had never read the books. "Jackson, a fan of the book for decades," said *Los Angeles Times* critic Ken-

neth Turan, “has somehow infused his own unwavering belief into the project. Because *Fellowship* means so much to him, he has brought cast, crew, and audience along and done it in a way that pleases devotees yet very much includes people who wouldn’t know a hobbit from a shoe tree.” Writing in the *Hollywood Reporter*, David Hunter agreed. “Quite masterfully paced and one of those rewarding movies that seems to get better and better as it progresses,” remarked Hunter, “*Fellowship* justifies its long running time” of approximately three hours.

The first movie, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, has been so popular that by late February 2002 it had sold over \$283 million in tickets. Recognized for its technical and artistic achievements, the film won five British Academy of Film and Television Arts awards, including one for best film. The film was also nominated for 13 Academy Awards, or Oscars, including one for best picture. As of this writing, fans are eagerly awaiting the Academy Awards ceremony in March 2002 to see how many Oscars it will win. The success of the first film in the trilogy has certainly helped build anticipation for the upcoming installments: *The Two Towers*, which will be released at the end of 2002, and *The Return of the King*, which arrives in theaters in late 2003.

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I love good editing, I love
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———— ” ————

After *The Lord of the Rings*

Because the three films in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy are scheduled to be released over the course of three years, audiences will see Wood playing Frodo from 2001 through 2003 and beyond. As an actor, he is aware of the potential dangers of being typecast as a certain type of actor. To avoid that fate, he will continue to take on different kinds of movies. “I’d love to work with Pete [Jackson again],” he said, “but I wouldn’t want to play Frodo. The thing is, we did three movies of probably the greatest fantasy novel, arguably the greatest novel of all time. We jumped into the fantasy realm and treated it like reality. I think this is it for fantasy—for all of us.” He continued, “I want to do something that is completely different from anything I’ve done. Something more mature, more character, more obscure—not your run-of-the-mill person. Something that’s a challenge to me and allows me to grow.”

Toward that end, Wood likes to accept roles on films that probably won't be blockbusters, such as the upcoming independent film *Ash Wednesday* and the offbeat comedy *Chain of Fools*. He also wants to branch out from acting and become involved in other aspects of film. "I love cinematography, I love good editing, I love directing," Wood says. "I think film in general is just an amazing art form. And I love acting. I want to continue acting for a long time, but I can see myself branching out into other divisions."

HOME AND FAMILY

Wood's parents divorced in 1996. His father, Warren Wood, moved back to Iowa, while Elijah and his mother, Debbie Wood, remained in California.

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"My mom has . . . been by my side all through my career. I owe everything to my mom. She has helped me maintain a sense of reality and gave me the perspective that acting should just be something I enjoyed doing."

After that, father and son didn't speak to each other for several years. More recently, however, the actor has renewed contact with his father. Wood has had a stronger and more consistent bond with his mother. When he's not on a movie set, the unmarried actor lives in a guest house behind her home. Debbie Wood manages much of her son's career, though recently Wood has taken on more responsibility. "My mom has . . . been by my side all through my career," he said. "I owe everything to my mom. She has helped me maintain a sense of reality and gave me the perspective that acting should

just be something I enjoyed doing." Despite past difficulties with his father, Wood feels that he has a close relationship with his family. "Family is so important. I rarely meet families who are as close as we are. I feel really blessed."

HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS

Wood loves to watch movies and listen to music. He likes to watch horror movies, and he is a big fan of *Star Wars* and its creator, George Lucas. His favorite bands are Radiohead, Smashing Pumpkins, and The Beatles. He also likes to read, and some of his favorite books are *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Dracula*. Because of his nickname, "Monkey," he collects stuffed monkeys as a hobby. In addition, Wood likes to go in-line skating and enjoys playing with his three bearded collies.

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Paradise, 1991
Forever Young, 1992
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The Good Son, 1993
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, 1993
North, 1994
The War, 1994
Flipper, 1996
The Ice Storm, 1997
Begin the Beguine, 1998
The Faculty, 1998
Black and White, 1999
The Adventures of Tom Thumb and Thumbelina, 2000 (animated)
The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring, 2001
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (forthcoming in 2002)
The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (forthcoming in 2003)

**Television**

- Child in the Night*, 1990
Day-O, 1992
Oliver Twist (The Wonderful World of Disney), 1997
The Bumblebee Flies Away, 2000

HONORS AND AWARDS

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Our indexes have a new look. In an effort to make our indexes easier to use, we've combined the Name and General Index into a new, cumulative General Index. This single ready-reference resource covers all the volumes in *Biography Today*, both the general series and the special subject series. The new General Index contains complete listings of all individuals who have appeared in *Biography Today* since the series began. Their names appear in bold-faced type, followed by the issue in which they appear. The General Index also includes references for the occupations, nationalities, and ethnic and minority origins of individuals profiled in *Biography Today*.

We have also made some changes to our specialty indexes, the Places of Birth Index and the Birthday Index. To consolidate and to save space, the Places of Birth Index and the Birthday Index will no longer appear in the January and April issues of the softbound subscription series. But these indexes can still be found in the September issue of the softbound subscription series, in the hardbound Annual Cumulation at the end of each year, and in each volume of the special subject series.

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Updates

Updated information on selected individuals appears in the Appendix at the end of the *Biography Today* Annual Cumulation. In the index, the original entry is listed first, followed by any updates.

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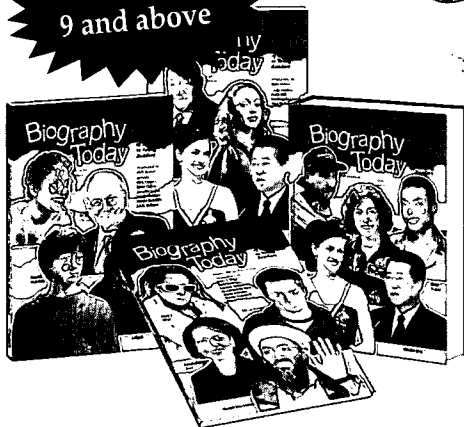
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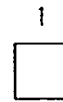
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