

Dolly PARTON

Who is she?

Reading comprehension

Dolly Parton is a larger-than-life living legend from Tennessee in the United States of America. She is a worldwide icon and is hailed as the “Queen of Country”.

What is she famous for?

She is famous for her music, TV and movie roles, and for writing books. Dolly is most famous for her career as a country singer and performer. Her songs (for example ‘Jolene’ and ‘9 to 5’) are known globally and have captured the hearts of generations. Dolly has written hundreds of songs for herself and others – many of which have been covered numerous times, for example ‘I will always love you’. This was famously covered by Whitney Houston after Dolly turned down Elvis Presley, who wanted to sing it. In her lifetime, she has sold more than 100 million records. She has had twenty-five No.1 hits and is the only artist who has had top 20 hits across six consecutive decades (1960s – 2010s).

She is well known for wearing elaborate outfits and wigs onstage. It is reported she owns over three hundred wigs! She once said that she would never leave the house without makeup on and even sleeps in it in order to feel glamorous.



Her childhood

Dolly Parton was born on 19th January 1946. She grew up in Locust Ridge in the Great Smoky Mountains. Her family was big – she was the fourth of twelve children. They lived in a one-bedroom cabin with no indoor plumbing and hardly any electricity. When Dolly was born, her parents couldn't pay the doctor who had delivered her, so they gave him a bag of oatmeal instead. You are still able to visit her first home, which has been lovingly restored by Dolly and her family.

Music has always been a very important part of her life and she cited her uncle, Bill Owens, for helping her get started in the music business. Dolly's talent was very obvious from a young age and she soon catapulted to super-stardom. She started her career as a radio host and an actress at the tender age of 10.

Singing career

Parton's singing career started to take off in 1967 when she was 21-years-old. Around this time, she appeared on 'The Porter Wagoner Show' with Porter Wagoner. They quickly became popular and recorded several country hits together.

Dolly achieved her first No. 1 country hit in 1971 with "Joshua," a bluegrass-inspired track about two solitary figures who find love. During the 1970s, she had more No. 1 hits including the very famous "Jolene," which is a song where a woman begs another beautiful woman not to take her man.

In the 1980s, Dolly hit the height of her fame. She made her film debut in the 1980 hit comedy '9 to 5', and she also contributed to its soundtrack. The title song became a No. 1 hit for Parton on both the pop and country charts and earned her an Academy Award nomination. Forty years later, this song can still be heard on dance floors across the globe.



Dressed up on the stage

Her greatest achievements

Dolly is living proof that you can dare to dream. Her story is a classic demonstration of rags to riches. She once said: "My dream was to make as many people happy as I could in this life." She has managed to do this through sharing her performance talents and using her fame for good.

1970 – 2017 a total of 12 wins at the Academy of Country Music Awards

1979 – Grammy award for 'Here you come again'

1982 – two Grammy awards for '9 to 5'

2004 – the U.S. Library of Congress gave her the distinguished 'Living Legend Award'

2006 – prestigious 'Kennedy Centre Honours'

2011 – Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award

2018 – two Guinness World Records. One for 'Most Decades With a Top 20 Hit on the US Hot Country Songs Chart' and 'Most Hits on US Hot Country Songs Chart By a Female Artist'

To date, Dolly is one of very few people to receive at least one nomination from all four major annual American entertainment award organisations: Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony.

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library

In 1995, Dolly founded Dolly Parton's Imagination Library as she wanted to encourage and improve literacy in her home state of Tennessee. She was inspired by her father, who was illiterate. Over the years, the program has posted books to needy children across the USA, Canada, the UK and Australia. It has now mailed over 130 million books!



Dolly Parton has two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame

Dollywood

Did you know?

In 1996, the first cloned sheep in the world was named after Dolly herself!

Would you believe that Dolly Parton even has a theme park in her honour? Opened in 1986 in Tennessee, it has a variety of attractions and rollercoasters for people of all ages and attracts over a million visitors every year. Despite owning the theme park, Dolly has never been on any of the rides as she is terrified of rollercoasters.

Random fact!

Dolly is Godmother to Miley Cyrus, who is a famous American singer. This is due to the fact she is very good friends with country star Billy Ray Cyrus (Miley's dad).

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