

## BIOGRAPHY: DOLLY PARTON

"I've always been a writer. My songs are the door to every dream I've ever had and every success I've ever achieved," says Dolly Parton of her incredible career, which has spanned nearly five decades and is showing no signs of slowing down.

An internationally renowned superstar, the iconic and irrepressible Parton has contributed countless treasures to the world of music entertainment, penning classic songs such as "Jolene," "Coat of Many Colors," and her mega-hit "I Will Always Love You." With 1977's crossover hit "Here You Come Again," she successfully erased the line between country and pop music without noticeably altering either her music or her image. "I'm not leaving country," she said at the time, "I'm just taking it with me."

Making her film debut in the 1980 hit comedy *9 to 5*, Dolly earned rave reviews for her performance and an Oscar nomination for writing the title tune, along with her second and third Grammy Awards. Roles in *Steel Magnolias*, *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *Rhinestone*, and *Straight Talk* followed, along with two network television series, made for television movies, network and HBO specials, and guest-starring roles in series television. In 2006, Dolly earned her second Oscar nomination for "Travelin' Thru," which she wrote for the film *Transamerica*.

Dolly Parton's remarkable life began very humbly. Born January 19, 1946 on a farm in Sevier County, Tennessee, Dolly is the fourth of twelve children. Her parents, Robert Lee and Avie Lee Parton struggled to make ends meet in the impoverished East Tennessee hills. This hard rural life was the foundation of Dolly's career, as she began singing almost before she could talk, according to her father. By age 10, Dolly was performing on local television and radio shows in nearby Knoxville, Tennessee. "I always wanted to be a star. It just seemed natural to me," she said. "Making music is all I've ever known."

Dolly left for Nashville the day after her high school graduation. On her first afternoon there, she met a young man, Carl Dean, who would become her husband. Two years later, in May 1966, they were married. "He's good for me, cause he's so different in nature from me," she smiles.

In 1967, Dolly's career took off when country music superstar Porter Wagoner began featuring her on his popular syndicated television show, exposing Dolly to over 45 million people in more than 100 markets and attracting the attention of record executives at RCA. Dolly and Porter had 14 Top Ten hits together, and Dolly quickly blossomed into one of the best-selling country artists in music history. By 1974, Dolly ended her working relationship with Wagoner. She was voted the Country Music Association Female Artist of the Year two years in a row, and in 1978, Dolly was named the CMA Entertainer of the Year.

In 1974, "I Will Always Love You" topped the charts and did so again in 1982 when it was revived in the movie *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, making Dolly the first artist to earn a number one record twice with the same song. In 1992, the song was recorded by Whitney Houston for the movie *The Bodyguard* and went on to sell in excess of 4 million copies, topping the charts once again. "I Will Always Love You" was named BMI's Most Performed Song of the Year in 1993.

Dolly saw a cherished dream become a reality in 1986 with the opening of her own theme park called Dollywood, in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, at the base of the Great Smoky Mountains. The state's number one tourist attraction, Dollywood was selected by the theme park industry as one of the top three theme parks in the world in 2006. The park is also honored by its industry to be the world's best entertainment park and to host the world's best Christmas event. Dollywood was presented with the Applause Award recognizing it as the world's best theme park for 2010-2011. 2010 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Dollywood, celebrated with a spectacular Hallmark Channel national TV special.

In 1988, Dolly founded a group of dinner attractions called Dixie Stampede. In 2001, she built Dollywood's Splash Country, which is Tennessee's largest water park and is honored to be the industry's current "must see Waterpark" in America. In 2011 she opened her newest dinner theatre attraction, The Pirate's Voyage. Dolly Parton's entertainment businesses attract 4million visitors annually and employ more than 3,000 in total.

Also in 1988, she began the Dollywood Foundation to inspire children in her home community to dream more, learn more, care more and be more. Currently the Foundation works with thousands of local partners to fund the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in the USA, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and Belize. The program provides a new, age appropriate book each month to preschool children from birth to their fifth birthday. To date, the program has gifted over 75 million books to children around the world. Dolly says, "My dad was prouder of me for this program than for my music career. He thought it was grand that all the kids called me the Book Lady." Dolly Parton was featured in *The Book Lady*, a 2008 documentary about her campaign for children's literacy.

Long respected for her instinctive business savvy, Dolly established Velvet Apple Music (BMI) early in her career and owns the copyrights and the publishing for her vast songwriting empire. She owns her own successful record label, Dolly Records.

Dolly Parton transitioned her flair for making hit music into producing hit movies and television shows when she established Sandollar Productions with former manager, Sandy Gallin. A film and television production company, Sandollar has produced feature films such as *Father of the Bride I and II*, *Straight Talk*, *Sabrina*, *Shining Through*, *IQ*, and the Academy Award-winning (for Best Documentary) *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt*, along with Fox television shows *Babes* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

Her 1994 autobiography was aptly titled "My Life and Other Unfinished Business."

Dolly Parton is one of the most honored female country performers of all time. Achieving 25 RIAA certified gold, platinum and multi-platinum awards, she has had 26 songs reach number 1 on the Billboard Country charts, a record for a female artist. She has 42 career top 10 country albums, a record for *any* artist, and she has 113 career charted singles over the past 40 years. All-inclusive sales of singles, albums, hits collections, paid digital downloads and compilation usage during her Hall of Fame career have reportedly topped a staggering 100 million records world-wide.

She has garnered 7 Grammy Awards, 10 Country Music Association Awards, 5 Academy of Country Music Awards, 3 American Music Awards and is one of only five female artists to win the Country Music Association's Entertainer of the Year Award.

In 1999, Dolly Parton was inducted as a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame. She has her own star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and became a member of the National Academy of Popular Music Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2001. Broadcast Music, Inc. honored Dolly with their Icon Award in 2003, and in 2004 the U.S. Library of Congress presented her with their Living Legend Award for her contribution to the cultural heritage of the United States. This was followed in 2005 with the National Medal of Arts, the highest honor given by the U.S. government for excellence in the arts. Dolly Parton is the first person to receive the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval ®.

In December, 2006 Dolly was honored by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for her lifetime of contributions to the arts. In June 2007 Dolly was named the recipient of the prestigious Johnny Mercer Award from the Songwriter's Hall of Fame. The Johnny Mercer Award is exclusively reserved for a songwriter who has already been inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in a prior year, and whose body of work is of such high quality and impact, that it upholds the gold standard set by the legendary Johnny Mercer.

A true American Icon, Dolly appeared as a guest mentor during the 2008 season of *American Idol* with all finalists singing Parton-penned songs within an entire episode.

Dolly Parton took Broadway by storm on April 7, 2009 when *9 to 5 The Musical* opened to rave reviews. With music and lyrics by Miss Parton (who was nominated for a 2009 Tony Award for Best Original Score) the splashy stage musical was widely acclaimed. Dolly also received the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical Score and Broadway.com's Theatre Fan's Choice Award for Best Musical Score. The National Tour of *9 to 5 The Musical* premiered in Nashville, TN in September, 2010 and played to sold out crowds throughout the United States.

In May of 2009, she became only the second person to receive an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Arts and Musical Letters from the University of Tennessee, where she also gave the commencement address. She quipped, "Now you can call me Dr. Dolly!"

Also in 2009, Dolly received the Academy of Country Music Jim Reeves International Award and the James D. Vaughn Impact Award from the Gospel Music Association.

Dolly's 42<sup>nd</sup> album, *Backwoods Barbie*, put Dolly back on top of the Country Music charts during 2009 and included a sold out tour of the US and Europe. Her 43<sup>rd</sup> album release was the critically acclaimed *Live From London CD & DVD*, which was filmed during her sold-out concerts in London. Dolly returned to the concert stage in 2011 with the *Better Day World Tour* playing shows in the US, Europe and Australia. Dolly's new CD titled *Better Day* is her 44<sup>th</sup> album.

Another milestone in the living legend's iconic career was the presentation of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Grammys in February 2011. This award is given by the Recording Academy to performers who have made creative contributions or outstanding artistic significance to the field of recording.

In 2012 Dolly returned to the big screen, co-starring with Queen Latifah in Alcon Entertainment's and Warner Bros. Pictures' "Joyful Noise," a funny and inspirational story of music, hope, love and renewal. The movie and soundtrack features three original songs written by Dolly.

In January 2014, Dolly began her world tour to promote her 45th album "Blue Smoke". The tour played over 40 shows in North America, Australia and Europe. While in Europe, Dolly played the Glastonbury Festival, the largest greenfield festival in the world. Her performance drew the biggest TV ratings for the BBC during the annual event with an audience of 2.6 million. Before she hit the stage, she was honored by the RIAA with a plaque commemorating 100 million albums sold worldwide.

Dolly signed a development deal with NBC in January 2015. Under the pact, the network is planning a series of TV movies with Parton based on her "songs, stories and inspiring life." The movies will be stand-alone and will contain music but won't be "musicals". "Coat of Many Colors" movie was the first of Dolly's songs to be adapted, all in an effort to increase the amount of family content airing on the network. This once-in-a-lifetime movie special takes place inside the tight-knit Parton family as they struggle to overcome devastating tragedy and discover the healing power of love, faith and a raggedy patchwork coat that helped make Parton who she is today. It aired in December 2015 with stellar ratings.

In 2016 NBC aired "Dolly Parton's Christmas of Many Colors: Circle of Love" drawing more than 11 million viewers. In the second chapter of Dolly Parton's life story, the Parton family prevails over unexpected peril to share a joyous family Christmas holiday and Dolly appears as The Painted Lady. .

2016 was a busy year for Dolly. In May she and her husband Carl renewed their wedding vows in honor of their 50th anniversary. In June, she embarked on a mostly sold-out, 60-city tour. Her new album, "Pure & Simple" debuted at No. 1 on charts around the world. She received the Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award at the 50th Annual CMA Awards. Also in 2016 Dolly teamed up with the award-winning vocal group Pentatonix to record her 1973 hit, "Jolene and won her eighth Grammy.

On Nov. 28, 2016, devastating wildfires affected parts of Sevier County and the Great Smoky Mountains where Dolly calls home. The fires took the lives of 14 people, injured over 100, burned over 17,000 acres inside the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and damaged or destroyed over 1700 structures (homes, businesses, and churches). So Dolly established The My People Fund which was committed to giving every family who lost their home in the fires \$1000 per month for six months. The Smoky Mountains Rise: A Benefit for the My People Fund telethon was organized. Millions of people tuned in to see star performances by Kenny Rogers, Hank Williams Jr., Reba McEntire, Cyndi Lauper and many more. In total, over \$9 million was raised. After the first distribution, the My People Fund served nearly 900 families.

Even with all of the national and international recognition given her, Dolly Parton calls the bronze statue of her, which stands on the courthouse lawn in her hometown of Sevierville, Tennessee, her “greatest honor, because it came from the people who know me.”

Always dreaming and always looking forward, Dolly is busier than ever. The phenomenon of Dolly Parton continues to flourish, as she remains one of world’s true superstars.