

This Day in History... April 23, 1928

Happy Birthday Shirley Temple

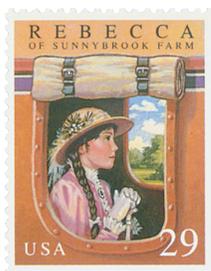
Beloved child star and diplomat Shirley Temple was born on April 23, 1928, in Santa Monica, California.

Temple had a talent for singing, dancing, and acting from a very early age. She started going to a dance school when she was just three years old. It was here that Charles Lamont, casting director for Educational Pictures, first discovered her. Though she hid behind the school's piano, Lamont saw something in Temple and asked her to audition for him.

Temple signed her first contract, with Educational Pictures, in 1932. She then appeared in their *Burlesks* short films, which had young children acting out recent film and political events. Temple then appeared in the *Frolics of Youth* series as well as commercials, before earning her first film role, a small part in *The Red-Haired Alibi*. Then by chance, a Fox Film songwriter happened to see Temple dancing in the lobby of a theater where one of her *Frolics of Youth* pictures had just played, and invited her to do a screen test.



Temple was the 20th honoree in the Legends of Hollywood Series.



Temple starred in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* in 1938, based on a 1903 novel by Kate Douglas Wiggin.

After starring in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, *Little Miss Broadway*, and *Just Around the Corner*, Temple appeared in her first color film, *The Little Princess*. She followed that up with *Susannah of the Mounties*, her last success with 20th Century Fox. Temple's 1940 films, *The Blue Bird* and *Young People* didn't perform well. Her parents bought out her contract and sent her to school. She was only 12 years old and had starred in 43 films.



Temple was the first and only female ambassador to Czechoslovakia.

Temple easily won the part and got her big break in *Stand Up and Cheer!* She became a star as soon as it was released and soon came to symbolize wholesome family entertainment. Temple had further success in *Baby Take a Bow* and *Little Miss Marker*. Then in 1934 Temple starred in *Bright Eyes*, the first film created specifically for her. This film also introduced her signature song, "On the Good Ship Lollipop." The following year she was the first child star to receive a miniature Juvenile Oscar. Also in 1935 she put her hand and foot prints in front of Grauman's Chinese Theatre.

Temple quickly became a beacon of positivity as America trudged through the Depression. President Roosevelt called her "Little Miss Miracle" for her positive effect on America's morale.

By the mid-1930s, Temple was the top earner for her studio, and there was a team of 19 writers that worked to create 11 original stories and classic adaptations specifically for her. She generally did four movies a year, including the hits *The Little Colonel*, *Our Little Girl*, *Curly Top*, *The Littlest Rebel*, *Captain January*, *Poor Little Rich Girl*, *Dimples*, and *Stowaway*. In 1937 she appeared in the John Ford-directed *Wee Willie Winkie* alongside Victor McLaglen and Cesar Romero. The film was Temple's favorite.



Temple was a delegate to the 1969 UN General Assembly.

In the early '40s Temple had a radio series, *Junior Miss*, and signed a contract with MGM, but her films there didn't fare well either. It seemed that her fans could not accept their favorite child actress was growing up. Temple retired for two years to focus on her education but returned to acting once again, appearing in *Kiss and Tell*, *The Bachelor and the Bobby-Soxer*, and *Fort Apache*, among others. None of these movies were major successes, and she retired again in 1950. Temple made a return to entertainment in 1958 when she hosted and narrated *Shirley Temple's Storybook*. She remained in TV for several years, making appearances on *The Red Skelton Show* and several others.

By the late 1960s, Temple took an interest in politics. In 1967, she ran for congress, hoping to become the only woman representing California in the House, saying, "I think men are fine and here to stay, but I have a hunch it wouldn't hurt to have a woman's viewpoint expressed in that delegation of 38 men." After coming in second, she was appointed to be a delegate to the 24th United Nations General Assembly. After this she was made US ambassador to Ghana and later the first female chief of protocol of the United States. In 1989, she was made US ambassador to Czechoslovakia. In Czechoslovakia, she witnessed the end of Soviet control and helped open diplomatic relations. She also served on several boards of directors including Walt Disney, Bank of America, and the National Wildlife Federation. Temple died in her California home on February 10, 2014.

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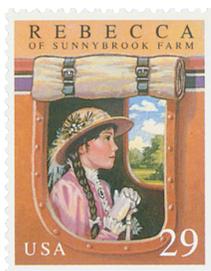
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