

## Laverne Cox honoured as first transgender Barbie

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**Transgender actress and activist Laverne Cox has been recognised with her own Barbie - a first for the storied, and controversial, doll.**

It goes on sale for \$40 (£32) ahead of her 50th birthday.

The star, who rose to fame in the Netflix prison comedy *Orange Is the New Black*, said she hoped the new doll would help people "dream big".



The doll is the latest release as toymaker Mattel works to remake Barbie's leggy blonde image.

Ms Cox, who has gone on to win numerous Emmy Awards and is an outspoken advocate for transgender issues, said she was shamed as a child for wanting a Barbie. Years later, after therapy, she finally went out and got one.

"I went out and bought a Barbie doll and played with her and dressed her and it was a way for me to heal my inner child," she said, adding that her mother later sent her a Barbie for Christmas.

Ms Cox worked closely with Mattel on the new doll, who wears a red tulle ballgown that can be refashioned into different outfits.

She said she hoped the doll would inspire children and remind parents to support kids of all gender identities who want to play with dolls.

"It's incredibly meaningful for me to have my Barbie doll for so many reasons," she said. "I hope that kids of all gender identities can look at this Barbie and dream."

"The space of play, playing with dolls, the space of creating worlds with dolls is that space of dreaming," she added. "And now kids get to dream with a Laverne Cox Barbie, the first transgender Barbie - that is a beautiful space of dreaming and possibility."

The Laverne Cox doll is part of Barbie's Tribute Collection, which launched last year with a likeness of Lucille Ball and recently recognised the Queen of England in the year of her Platinum Jubilee.



In recent years, Mattel has added curvier, shorter dolls in different colours; released a line of gender neutral dolls; and regularly launched new role model Barbies, recognising female astronauts and [scientists](#), historic figures like civil rights activist Rosa Parks and pioneering sports stars, including hijab-wearing fencer Ibtihaj Muhammad.

"Barbie knows that representation matters and is committed to continuing to increase diversity across collections, so that more people can see themselves reflected," the company said in a statement.

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