



Early life and education

DeGeneres was born and raised in Metairie, Louisiana, to Elizabeth Jane (née Pfeffer), a speech therapist, and Elliott Everett DeGeneres, an insurance agent.[7][1][8] She has one brother, Vance, a musician and producer. She is of French, English, German, and Irish descent. She was raised as a Christian Scientist.[9] In 1973, her parents filed for separation and were divorced the following year.[9] Shortly after, Ellen's mother married Roy Gruessendorf, a salesman. Betty Jane and Ellen moved with Gruessendorf from the New Orleans area to Atlanta, Texas. Vance stayed with his father. On a February 2011 episode of her show, she told her studio audience of a letter from the New England Historic Genealogical Society confirming she is 15th cousin to Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, via their shared common ancestor Thomas Fairfax.[10][11]

DeGeneres graduated from Atlanta High School in May 1976, after completing her first years of high school at Grace King High School in Metairie, Louisiana. She moved back to New Orleans to attend the University of New Orleans, where she majored in communication studies. After one semester, she left school to do clerical work in a law firm with a cousin, Laura Gillen. Her early jobs included working at J. C. Penney,[12] and being a waitress at T.G.I. Friday's and another restaurant, a house painter, a hostess, and a bartender. She relates much of her childhood and career experiences in her comedic work.



Animal Rights and Veganism

Ellen previously described herself as a vegan and “big animal lover”. [78][79] De Rossi, too, is a vegan.[79] Ellen co-ordinated a vegan outreach website titled ‘Going Vegan with Ellen’.[80] She intended to open a vegan tapas bar, Bokado, in Los Angeles, but plans fell through.[81]

The site for The Ellen DeGeneres Show contains a section called “Going Vegan With Ellen”, in which she promotes “Meatless Mondays” and features vegan recipes.[82] She has several times invited Humane Society of the United States CEO Wayne Pacelle to speak on her show about the organization’s efforts in animal protection legislation. In 2009, PETA named her their “Woman of the Year.”[83] In April 2013, she donated \$25,000 to stop Ag-Gag anti-whistleblower legislation in Tennessee, which would prohibit undercover investigators from recording footage of animal abuse on farms.[84]

DeGeneres served as campaign ambassador to Farm Sanctuary’s Adopt-A-Turkey Project in 2010, asking people to start “a new tradition by adopting a turkey instead of eating one” at Thanksgiving.[85]

Humanitarianism

In November 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton named her a special envoy for Global AIDS Awareness.[86] On December 3, 2011, DeGeneres opened the show at the David Lynch Foundation’s 3rd annual “Change Begins Within” gala at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art to raise funds to bring Transcendental Meditation to



Sources

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