

Text C: Audrey Hepburn

Born on May 4, 1929, in Brussels, Belgium, Audrey Hepburn spent part of her youth in England at a boarding school. During much of World War II, she studied at the Arnhem Conservatory in The Netherlands. After the Nazis invaded the country, Hepburn and her mother struggled to survive. She reportedly helped the resistance movement by delivering messages, according to an article in *The New York Times*.

At the age of 22, Audrey Hepburn went to New York to star in the Broadway production of *Gigi*, based on the book by the French writer Colette. Only a few weeks after the play premiered, news reports indicated that Hepburn was being wooed by Hollywood. Only two years later, she took the world by storm in the film *Roman Holiday* (1953) with Gregory Peck. She won the Academy Award for Best Actress for this performance. Hepburn made another award worthy performance in *Sabrina* (1954) as the title character, the daughter of a wealthy family's driver. Hepburn earned an Academy Award nomination for her work on this bittersweet romantic comedy.

Showcasing her dancing abilities, Hepburn starred opposite Fred Astaire in the musical *Funny Face* (1957). This film featured Hepburn undergoing another transformation. This time, she played a beatnik bookstore clerk who gets discovered by a fashion photographer played by Astaire. Lured by a free trip to Paris, the clerk becomes a beautiful model. Hepburn's clothes for the film were designed by Hubert de Givenchy, one of her close friends.

Stepping away from lighthearted fare, Hepburn co-starred in the film adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* with her husband, Mel Ferrer, and Henry Fonda in 1956. Three years later, she played Sister Luke in *The Nun's Story* (1959), which earned her an Academy Award nomination. The film focused on her character's struggle to succeed as a nun. A review in *Variety* read, "Audrey Hepburn has her most demanding film role, and she gives her finest performance." Following that stellar performance, she went on to star in the John Huston-directed western *The Unforgiven* (1960) with Burt Lancaster.

Returning to her glamorous roots, Hepburn set new fashion standards as Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961), which was based on a novella by Truman Capote. She played a seemingly lighthearted, but ultimately troubled New York City party girl who gets involved with a struggling writer played by George Peppard. Hepburn received her fourth Academy Award nomination for her work on the film.

For the rest of the 1960s, Hepburn took on a variety of roles. She starred with Cary Grant in the romantic thriller *Charade* (1963). Playing the lead in the film version of the popular musical *My Fair Lady* (1964), she went through one of the most famous metamorphoses of all time. As Eliza Doolittle, she played an English flower girl who becomes a high society lady. Taking on more dramatic fare, she starred as a blind woman in the suspenseful tale *Wait Until Dark* (1967) opposite Alan Arkin. This film brought her a fifth Academy Award nomination.

In her later years, acting took a back seat to her work on behalf of children. She became a goodwill ambassador for UNICEF in the late 1980s. "I can testify to what UNICEF means to children, because I was among those who received food and medical relief right after World War II," she said, on her appointment as a Goodwill Ambassador in 1989. "I have a long-lasting gratitude and trust for what UNICEF does."

Hepburn made a series of UNICEF field trips, visiting a polio vaccine project in Turkey, training programmes for women in Venezuela, projects for children living and working on the street in Ecuador, projects to provide drinking water in Guatemala and Honduras and radio literacy projects in El Salvador. She saw schools in Bangladesh, projects for impoverished children in Thailand, nutrition projects in Viet Nam and camps for displaced children in Sudan.

Hepburn also worked tirelessly for UNICEF when not making field trips. She testified before the US Congress, took part in the World Summit for Children, launched UNICEF's *State of the World's Children* reports, hosted Danny Kaye International Children's Award ceremonies, designed fundraising cards, participated in benefit concert tours and gave many speeches and interviews promoting UNICEF's work.

Hepburn received the United States' highest civilian award, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in December 1992. During that year, though ill with cancer, she had continued her work for UNICEF, travelling to Somalia, Kenya, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, France and the United States.

Her work to help children around the world continues. Her sons, Sean Ferrer and Luca Dotti, along with her companion Robert Wolders, established the Audrey Hepburn Memorial Fund at UNICEF to continue Hepburn's humanitarian work in 1994. It is now known as the Audrey Hepburn Society at the US Fund for UNICEF.

<http://www.biography.com/people/audrey-hepburn-9335788>
http://www.unicef.org/people/people_audrey_hepburn.html