Brooklyn Deas

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Reese Witherspoon

Reese Witherspoon is one of the top-paid actresses in Hollywood. She is a Louisiana native who has represented the state in a positive way and is best known in her movies for her southern charm. Although it is extremely difficult to get into the Hollywood industry, it appears to be even more difficult to survive once there. Reese is one of few women in the industry with a positive image. She is a woman of class who carries herself as such and is not an actress who is constantly seen in the tabloids for drugs, alcohol, or family drama. Reese is a woman with talent and values and knows the importance of being considerate of others while following one’s dreams in life.

Laura Jeanne Reese Witherspoon was born on March 22, 1976, at Southern Baptist Hospital in New Orleans, Louisiana. Reese was the second child born to the Witherspoon family, and at the time of her birth, her father was a student at Tulane University medical school. Later, Dr. Witherspoon became an ear, nose, and throat surgeon and served in the military. Reese’s mother, Betty Reese Witherspoon, was a registered nurse who later earned a Ph.D. degree in pediatric nursing (G). Obviously, Reese was raised by intelligent people, and the Witherspoon family knew the work ethic required to be successful in life with a career.

In Reese’s early life, the family spent a few years in Wiesbaden, Germany. Her father held the title of lieutenant colonel and served in the US Army Reserves. After living in Germany, the Witherspoons moved back to the states and settled in Nashville, Tennessee. There, Reese began modeling at the age of seven. Shortly after taking up modeling, she began to be noticed as she appeared on local television commercials, and these opportunities led to her first big break in the industry. In 1990, she received her first major acting role in Robert Mulligan's The Man in the Moon. She played the role of a 14-year old tomboy and had a successful performance. A few years later she landed roles in bigger films such as Jack the Bear and A Far Off Place (G).

In 1994, Reese graduated from Harpeth Hall High School, an all-girls school in Nashville. Reese decided to put a hold on her acting career to attend Stanford University. However, her college was cut short when she accepted the opportunity to star in two major motion pictures: Fear along with Mark Wahlberg and Freeway with Kiefer Sutherland. Even though neither film was a huge box-office success, they did help to establish Reese in Hollywood and served as a gateway for bigger film roles in movies such as Pleasantville, Election, and Cruel Intentions (G).

Reese had starred in nearly ten movies before she got her major breakthrough in 2001. Reese’s biggest and most popular role came as Elle Woods in the 2001 comedy Legally Blonde. She stole the viewers’ hearts with her sassy, carefree spirit. The movie was a huge box-office hit and established Reese as one of the top female actresses in Hollywood. The very next year, she starred in the extremely southern and popular movie Sweet Home Alabama which went on to bring in over 100 million dollars at the box office. In 2005, Witherspoon received worldwide attention and praise for her portrayal of June Carter Cash in Walk the Line, which earned her an Academy Award, Golden Globe, BAFTA and Screen Actors Guild Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role (“Reese,” Wikipedia). In 2006, Reese received the best actress Oscar for her role as June Carter Cash (G).

Shortly after all of Reese’s many filming successes, she went through some challenges in her personal life. Reese married Ryan Phillippe in 1999, and a daughter, Ava Elizabeth, was born that same year. In 2003 a son, Deacon, was born to complete their family. Unfortunately, the Hollywood couple separated at the end of 2006 and divorced in October of 2007 (G). However, in 2011 Reese married her second husband, Jim Toth, and they are expecting their first child together later this year (“Reese,” Wikipedia).

Although Reese is not one to share much about her personal life or get involved in the Hollywood gossip, she does get involved in giving back to society. She is now working with children's and women's advocacy organizations. She serves on the board of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) and was named Global Ambassador of Avon Products in 2007, serving as honorary chair of the charitable Avon Foundation (“Reese,” Wikipedia). Reese also returned to New Orleans to see the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina and raised money to help those in need. She said, “I feel really blessed to be able to be on this side of it, but I also recognize the huge responsibility that we have to these people. And I will never forget this experience” (“Reese,” ABC News). On December 1, 2010, Witherspoon received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (“Reese,” Wikipedia).

Being a famous actress is just a small portion of what Reese Whiterspoon is all about. Reese said, “Many people worry so much about managing their careers, but rarely spend half that much energy managing their lives. I want to make my life, not just my job, the best it can be. The rest will work itself out” (G). Reese is a woman who is respected and adored by many. She is a talented actress, a loving mother, and a giver to the needy. Reese Witherspoon said that she is proud of her “Southern upbringing,” and it had taught her about “being conscientious about people’s feelings, being polite, being responsible and never taking for granted what you have in your life” (“Reese,” Wikipedia). She has accomplished incredible achievements in her life, and I am proud to say that she was born in Louisiana.

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