

## This Day in History... November 12, 1929

### Happy Birthday Grace Kelly

Actress, philanthropist, and Princess, Grace Kelly was born on November 12, 1929, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Grace Kelly was born into an affluent family. Her father was an Olympic gold medalist and her mother was a model and first female athletics coach at the University of Pennsylvania. She began acting and modeling as a child, earning the lead in a school play at the age of 12. Against her parent's wishes, Kelly embarked on an acting career, studying at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York. She had her Broadway debut while still a student, appearing in *The Father*.

After school, Kelly appeared in the television adaptation of the Sinclair Lewis Novel, *Bethel Merriday*. This was the first of about 60 live television programs Kelly acted in. Kelly's television success led to her first film role, a small part in the 1951 movie *Fourteen Hours*. Though her role didn't earn Kelly widespread fame, she did catch the attention of Gary Cooper, who visited the set one day. He took notice of Kelly's elegant, subdued personality, later stating she was "different from all these actresses we've been seeing so much of." As a result, she was invited to Hollywood to co-star in *High Noon* with Cooper.

Impressed by an earlier screen test, director John Ford invited Kelly to Hollywood in 1952, and she subsequently signed a seven-year contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM). Kelly's first MGM movie, *Mogambo*, earned her a Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actress and an Academy Award Nomination for Best Supporting Actress. Kelly's career took off in the next few years, starring in *Dial M for Murder*, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*, *Rear Window*, *The Country Girl*, *Green Fire*, and *High Society*. She went on to win one Academy Award and two Golden Globes.

In 1955, Kelly led the US delegation at the Cannes Film Festival, where she met Prince Rainier III of Monaco. The pair remained in touch after Kelly returned to the US. That December, Rainier toured America, visited Kelly, and met her family. He proposed after just three days and the two families immediately began preparations for what the press dubbed "The Wedding of the Century." Two separate ceremonies were held, with one watched by an estimated 30 million television viewers.

As a princess, Kelly's film career was essentially over, though she did occasional poetry readings and documentary narration. Kelly spent her years in Monaco as a mother of three and dedicated philanthropist. She founded AMADE Mondiale, a non-profit organization that protects children around the world from violence, exploitation, and abuse. She also worked to improve the arts institutions of Monaco, establishing the Princess Grace Foundation.

On September 13, 1982, Grace suffered a stroke while driving and crashed her car. Her injuries were severe and she died the following day. At a memorial service, James Stewart remarked that "she was just about the nicest lady I ever met" and that "every time I saw her was a holiday of its own."

Prince Rainier, who never remarried, was an avid stamp collector. Throughout his reign, he was involved in the design of many of the country's stamps and once said stamps were "the best ambassador of a country."



*Based on a publicity portrait taken for Country Girl, this stamp was engraved by the world-renowned Czeslaw Slania.*



*Monaco's joint-issue stamp with the US*



*Kelly's charity, World Association of Children's Friends (AMADE), received consultative status with the UN.*

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