



FAMOUS LOUISVILLIANS

From actors to authors, sports legends to history makers, Louisville and Kentucky has produced some remarkable people, all recognized as individuals of note.



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Foster Brooks

Born in Louisville, Foster Brooks began his career at WHAS-AM. He gained recognition after reporting about the Ohio River flood of 1937 and then moved out West where he started working as a stand-up comedian.

Lance Burton

A magician from Louisville, Lance Burton found a love for magic at a very young age. He moved to California after he turned 20 and quickly found success. He appeared on “The Tonight Show” with Johnny Carson 10 times and appeared another 10 times during Jay Leno’s tenure as host. Burton has also performed for both Queen Elizabeth and President Reagan.

Tom Cruise

American actor and producer, Cruise is best known for his roles in such movies as “Risky Business,” “Jerry Maguire,” “A Few Good Men” and “Top Gun.” Cruise has been nominated for three Academy Awards® and won three Golden Globe Awards®. Before becoming one of the biggest stars in Hollywood, Cruise lived in Louisville and attended Saint Xavier High School during his time in the city.

Irene Dunne

Nominated five times for the Academy Award® for best actress, Irene Dunne was famous from the 1930s to the 1950s. Growing up in Louisville, her father worked as a steamboat inspector. Dunne starred in many films including “The Awful Truth” and “My Favorite Wife,” both with Cary Grant. Dunne has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Bob Edwards

Louisville native Bob Edwards, is a Peabody Award-winning member of the National Radio Hall of Fame (inducted in 2004). He is the former host of NPR’s “Morning Edition” and the current host of “The Bob Edwards Show” on Sirius XM Radio. He is a graduate from St. Xavier High School and the University of Louisville.

Ed Hamilton

Living in Louisville, Hamilton is an American sculptor who specializes in public art. He gained national attention in 1992 when his Amistad Memorial was unveiled in New Haven, Conn., and in 1998 for his African-American Civil War Memorial, “The Spirit of Freedom” in Washington, D.C. His work can be seen around town, including on the Belvedere, the Frazier History Museum and his Abraham Lincoln Memorial in Waterfront Park.

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Lionel Hampton

One of the first jazz vibraphonists, Lionel Hampton had a long and successful career as a percussionist, pianist, bandleader and actor. Born in Louisville, but lived all over the country as a child picking up musical knowledge along the way. Throughout his career, he performed with some of the most notable jazz musicians of the time including Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker.

Helen Humes

Born in Louisville, Humes was an American Jazz and R&B singer who started her career in 1927. In 1938, Humes became a singer with the Count Basie Orchestra replacing Billie Holiday. She was given the key to the city of Louisville in 1975.

Jennifer Lawrence

As of 2016, Jennifer Lawrence is the highest-paid actress in the world. She is the youngest person to accrue four Academy Award® nominations. She won the Academy Award® for Best Actress in 2012 for her role in "Silver Linings Playbook"; the second youngest ever to win the award. Lawrence is a native to Louisville, and with no prior training she convinced her parents at the age of 14 to take her to New York where she met her talent agent and began her career.

Victor Mature

Born and raised in Louisville, Victor Mature left for California and was discovered performing on stage at the Pasadena Community Playhouse. He starred in many Hollywood productions, including Cecil B. DeMille's "Samson and Delilah."

My Morning Jacket

Louisville-rooted rock band that formed in 1998 is now a world-renowned music maker. Still going strong after seven studio releases, the band's sound, rooted in rock and country, is often experimental and psychedelic. The group's fan base began to grow in part because of its live performances. The band has performed several times at Bonnaroo and Austin City Limits. It has also curated the lineup for local music festival Forecastle.

Diane Sawyer

Former ABC World News anchor began her career in Louisville at WLKY. Her father, Erbon Powers "Tom" Sawyer, was a county judge whom Jefferson County's first state park, E.P. "Tom" Sawyer State Park, was named after.

Nicole Scherzinger

Attended grade school and high school in Louisville, and is best known as the lead singer for The Pussycat Dolls. While her music career continues as a solo artist, she was the winner of the "Dancing with the Stars" season 10 Mirror Ball Trophy, and has served as a judge on "The X Factor."

Ben Sollee

A Kentucky native, Ben Sollee began playing cello in elementary school. His love for folk and jazz music comes through in his music. Often arriving to his Kentucky performances by bike, Sollee is an activist for many causes, especially those affecting the state of Kentucky.



SPORTS

Muhammad Ali

Ali is undeniably the most famous person to call Louisville home. Born and raised in Louisville, Ali was loved and revered throughout the world but always considered Louisville to be his home. It held a special place in his heart, and the city reciprocated that feeling back to him. Ali, originally known as Cassius Clay, was born in Louisville on January 17, 1942. It was here he honed his ability as a boxer, and it was here he returned to after winning Gold in the 1960 Rome Olympics. He returned often after capturing the title of Heavyweight Champion of the World. After his retirement from boxing he was involved with the vision and direction of the Muhammad Ali Center. And it is here, in Louisville, that "The Greatest" has his final resting place in Cave Hill Cemetery.

Denny Crum

Former men's college basketball coach at the University of Louisville who guided the Cardinals to two NCAA championships and six Final Fours. He is honored in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame and is one of the major figures in the history of sports in Kentucky.

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Pat Day

The all-time leading rider at Churchill Downs, Pat Day is a local legend. He has been inducted into the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame and has won the Eclipse Award for outstanding Jockey four times. Day won the 1992 Kentucky Derby on Lil E. Tee. Day retired in 2005, and has committed to spend the rest of his life spreading the Gospel.

Darrell Griffith

Darrell Steven Griffith, also known by his nickname "Dr. Dunkenstein," was born in Louisville and got his basketball career start at Male High School. Though heavily recruited by colleges across the country, Griffith stayed at the University of Louisville and delivered the school's first-ever NCAA men's basketball championship in 1980. Griffith spent his entire professional career with the Utah Jazz of the National Basketball Association and is now retired.

Bud Hillerich

The 120-year history of the Louisville Slugger baseball bat began in the talented hands of 17-year-old John A. "Bud" Hillerich. He crafted the very first bat for local baseball star Pete Browning in his father's woodshop. The first use of the term "Louisville Slugger" was in 1893 when the bat became a baseball staple.

Paul Hornung

Heisman Trophy winner, and an inductee to the College Football Hall of Fame and the Pro Football Hall of Fame, Paul Hornung was a player for the Green Bay Packers. Each year the Paul Hornung Award is given to the most versatile player in college football.

Lamar Jackson

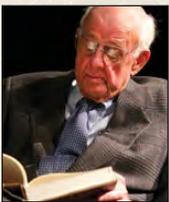
University of Louisville's star quarterback who is the most recent winner of the Heisman Trophy. At 19, Jackson is the youngest player ever to win college football's greatest award, and the first player from the University of Louisville ever to win the award.

Rick Pitino

Current head coach for the University of Louisville men's basketball. Pitino holds the distinction of being the first coach in NCAA history to lead three different schools (Providence College, the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville) to a Final Four, and the only coach in the NCAA to lead two different schools to an NCAA National Championship (Kentucky and Louisville).

Pee Wee Reese

Pee Wee Reese played baseball for the Dodgers, but got his start in the minor leagues playing for the Louisville Colonels. An inductee to the Pro Baseball Hall of Fame, he contributed to seven National League Championships for the Dodgers and was himself a 10-time All Star. Reese is also famous for his support of teammate Jackie Robinson, the first African-American player in the major leagues, especially in Robinson's difficult years.



AUTHORS

Dianne Aprile

Graduating from both the University of Louisville and Spalding University, Dianne Aprile has lived and worked in Louisville for most of her life. She is the author of four nonfiction works. She also wrote for Louisville's daily newspaper, *The Courier-Journal*, for nearly 30 years.

Wendell Berry

Wendell Berry is originally from Henry County, Ky. He is an American novelist, poet, environmental activist, cultural critic and farmer. A prolific writer, Berry has written many novels, short stories, poems and essays. Berry is also a recipient of the National Humanities Medal.

Sallie Bingham

Since her first novel was published in 1961, Sallie Bingham has been writing a variety of things, including plays, short stories, poems and memoirs. Her works have been included in many anthologies and publications. She is also the founder of the Kentucky Foundation for Women, which encourages the use of feminist ideas in artistic expressions.

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Sue Grafton

Sue Grafton, an American author, is most noted for her 'alphabet series' starting with the book "A is for Alibi." Grafton was born and raised in Louisville, graduated from the University of Louisville, and still lives here part-time today with her husband.

Alice Hagan

Best known for her 1901 novel, "Mrs. Wiggs in the Cabbage Patch," Alice Hagan was a writer from Louisville. Her Cabbage Patch sequels, stories about an Irish ghetto in Louisville, are her most popular works.

Sena Jeter Nasland

An American writer, she is the author of eight works of fiction, including "Ahab's Wife" in 1999, and "Four Spirits" in 2003, both named a **New York Times** Notable Book of the Year. In 2005, Nasland was named Poet Laureate of Kentucky. She is co-founder and program director of Louisville's Spalding University brief-residency MFA in Writing, where she edits "The Louisville Review" and Fleur-de-Lis Press. She recently retired from her position as Distinguished Teaching Professor at the University of Louisville.

Hunter S. Thompson

American author and journalist, and one of the principle symbols of American counterculture, Hunter Stockton Thompson was born in Louisville and spent his early youth in the city. Thompson created and popularized Gonzo journalism, a style in which the author becomes an active, central character in the story they are reporting or portraying. His books on politics and society, including "The Hell's Angels," a detailed expose on the famous motorcycle club, and the cult-classic "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas," were regarded as groundbreaking among journalists. Thompson is well known for his use of illegal substances and love for firearms. Hunter died in 2005 at the age of 67.



HISTORICAL

Louis D. Brandeis

Born in Louisville, Brandeis graduated from Harvard Law School at the age of 20 with the highest-grade average in the law school's history. President Woodrow Wilson appointed Brandeis to the U.S Supreme Court in 1916. Brandeis, the first Jewish Justice, was to become one of the most famous and influential figures to serve on the high court. His opinions were, according to legal scholars, some of the greatest defenses of freedom of speech and the right to privacy ever written by a member of the Supreme Court. He retired from the court in 1939. The University of Louisville's law school is the Louis D. Brandeis School of Law. The remains of Brandeis, along with his wife, are interred beneath the portico of the law school.

George Garvin Brown

Founder of Brown-Forman, George Garvin Brown started out as a pharmaceuticals salesman who had the bright idea to bottle and seal whiskey to ensure quality. Since he started it in 1870, Brown-Forman has grown into a huge American-owned wine and spirits company, producing Old Forester, Jack Daniels and Woodford Reserve among others.

Tom Bullock

A Louisville native, and an esteemed bartender, Bullock was the first African American to publish a cocktail book; his was one of the last drink collections released before the United States banned alcohol sales during Prohibition. Written in 1917, the book was titled "The Ideal Bartender."

George Rogers Clark

War general and Louisville founder, Clark was the highest ranking American military officer on the Northwestern frontier during the Revolutionary War. In 1778, he helped settle Corn Island, an outpost at the Falls of the Ohio, which later became Louisville. Clark died at Locust Grove, now a historic home in Louisville. He is buried in Louisville's Cave Hill Cemetery.

William Clark

Younger brother of George Rogers Clark, William Clark was an American explorer and soldier. Clark, along with Meriwether Lewis, helped lead the Lewis & Clark Expedition of 1804 to 1806 across the Louisiana Purchase to the Pacific Ocean, and claimed the Pacific Northwest for the United States.

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John Colgan

Inventor of “Taffy Julie” in 1883, which was later known as bubble gum. Another inventor beat Colgan to the patent, though he is still credited with the invention.

Thomas E. Edison

The inventor spent nearly two years in Louisville as a young telegrapher. Some of his inventions can be seen at the Thomas Edison House, an 1850s shotgun-style home, where Edison rented a room while he worked as a telegrapher for Western Union.

Mildred & Patty Hill

Louisville-born sisters and kindergarten teachers wrote the “Happy Birthday” song. Originally called “Good Morning to You,” it later changed to this traditional birthday anthem. The sisters are buried in Cave Hill Cemetery, and were posthumously inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Abraham Lincoln

The 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln was born in LaRue County, Ky., right down the road from Louisville. Often referred to as the best president in the history of the United States, Lincoln led the country through the Civil War. He is credited with ending slavery in America. Louisvillian Joshua Speed was a roommate of Lincoln’s in Springfield, Ill., and became life-long friends. Lincoln spent time with Speed at his family’s plantation, Farmington, in Louisville in 1841. Joshua’s brother James Speed served as Lincoln’s Attorney General during his presidency.

Thomas Merton

Merton was a Trappist monk who lived at the Abbey of Gethsemani outside of Bardstown, Ky. He is world renowned as a Christian writer, social critic and interfaith pioneer. It was in Louisville that Merton experienced his famous epiphany and spiritual vision in 1958. He wrote about it in his book “Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander.” The place where it happened is commemorated with a historical marker at the corner of Fourth and Muhammad Ali Boulevard. Bellarmine University, in Louisville, is home to the Thomas Merton Center. It is home to the largest collection of the works of Thomas Merton.

Frank Neuhauser

Son of a Kentucky stonemason and Louisville resident, Frank was 11 years old in 1925 when he spelled “gladiolus” correctly to win the nation’s first spelling championship.

Colonel Harland Sanders

Harland David “Colonel” Sanders was an American fast food businessman who founded Kentucky Fried Chicken, now re-branded as KFC. His image remains the “face” in KFC promotions. The “Colonel” is buried in Louisville’s Cave Hill Cemetery.

Zachary Taylor

Twelfth president of the United States, who lived on the frontier of Louisville during his youth. Taylor was buried in the Taylor family plot, which was later turned into a National Cemetery with the help of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. In 1926, it was renamed the Zachary Taylor National Cemetery.



HOMETOWN HERO BANNERS

When you visit Louisville, make sure to keep an eye out for some of the “famous Louisvillians” gazing at you from banners that hang on buildings around the city. With the purpose of building pride within the local community and enhance Louisville’s image as an exciting city, these banners recognize and honor the city’s famous sons and daughters. Visit www.louheroes.org for information and locations of all the banners.