

**glitter**

**Marilyn  
Monroe**



**international**

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## MARILYN MONROE

I am a little surprised to realise that it is more than 50 years since actress Marilyn Monroe died of a drug overdose on August 5, 1962, at only 36 years of age, because her life still captures our imagination and admiration. Monroe's timeless qualities mean new generations are as interested in her as those of previous eras.

Achieving stardom in a time when our idols were more curvaceous, Marilyn Monroe's allure has not waned and I believe she perfectly epitomises the 'blonde bombshell' label.

A troubled childhood and early marriage made Marilyn determined to achieve her dream of becoming an actress. She eventually took acting lessons under the tutelage of Lee Strasberg who is considered to be the "father of method acting in America".<sup>(1)</sup> While Monroe was a student, Lee Strasberg commented, "I have worked with hundreds and hundreds of actors and actresses, and there are only two that stand out way above the rest. Number one is Marlon Brando, and the second is Marilyn Monroe."<sup>(2)</sup>

Marilyn had roles in many well-known movies, among them being *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. At the Los Angeles premiere of that film, Monroe and co-star Jane Russell pressed their hand- and footprints alongside one another in the cement in the forecourt of Grauman's Chinese Theatre.<sup>(3)</sup>

Marilyn's three turbulent marriages all ended in divorce. Plagued by a lack of confidence in her acting abilities and terrible stage-fright, Marilyn became increasingly dependent on alcohol and prescription drugs. Life for Marilyn was not all bad; on May 19, 1962, she attended the early birthday celebration of President John F. Kennedy at Madison Square Garden and sang "Happy Birthday" along with a specially written verse based on Bob Hope's "Thanks for the Memory".

Kennedy responded to her performance with the remark, "Thank you. I can now retire from politics after having had 'Happy Birthday' sung to me in such a sweet, wholesome way."<sup>[4]</sup>

Marilyn Monroe received many accolades and awards, but I think perhaps the best tribute is our ongoing fascination with her life, talent and beauty.

- (1) Mel Gussow, *New York Times*, February 18, 1982
- (2) Summers, Anthony (1985). *Goddess, The Secret Lives of Marilyn Monroe*. Guild Publishing, London.
- (3) Los Angeles Times article posted by Scott Harrison, January 18, 2012 titled 'Marilyn and Jane cement their fame'
- (4) P.271 Summers, Anthony (1985). *Goddess, The Secret Lives of Marilyn Monroe*. Guild Publishing, London.



Shaw photographed the iconic "flying skirt" image of Marilyn Monroe on the set of *The Seven Year Itch*, New York City, 1954. When posing for this shot, Marilyn called out "Hi, Sam Spade," her nickname for Shaw, borrowed from the protagonist in Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*. Photos and text by Sam Shaw© Sam Shaw Inc./Licensed by Shaw Family Archives/[www.shawfamilyarchives.com](http://www.shawfamilyarchives.com)



In his famous photos of Marilyn on the beach, Shaw captured the spirit of the sex symbol. "She's Aphrodite, a Rubenesque Chrysis, bursting with the sensuous fun of living," he said. Photos and text by Sam Shaw© Sam Shaw Inc./Licensed by Shaw Family Archives/[www.shawfamilyarchives.com](http://www.shawfamilyarchives.com)