



# Ellen Degeneres: A Biography

*Macie Melendez*

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### ABOUT THE BOOK

Ellen DeGeneres is a stand-up comedian, a TV show host, an actress, and an author. She gained her celebrity status through years of stand-up comedy in the early 1980s, earning her first major breakthrough after she was nationally recognized and named The Funniest Person in America after winning a competition sponsored by the cable network Showtime, according to IMDb.

Her next big break in the public eye was in 1986 when acting on a tip from Jay Leno, The Tonight Show starring Johnny Carson sent a booking agent to catch her act at the Improv in Hollywood, as Bio reports. The booking agent liked what he saw, and Ellen was invited to The Tonight Show as a result. Her popularity soared.

Ellen is most famous today for her daily talk show, The Ellen DeGeneres Show, which launched in 2003. Ellen also previously starred in two TV sitcoms, Ellen, from 1994 to 1998 and The Ellen Show, from 2001 to 2002. In addition to her comedic talent, Ellen has a strong voice in the gay and lesbian community, as she is a lesbian herself. She often uses her celebrity to speak out about gay marriage rights.

### MEET THE AUTHOR

Macie Melendez has been a professional writer since 2005 and has been published in various publications, including Home Energy and San Francisco magazine, among others. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English from San Diego State University, and currently lives in San Francisco with her husband and their dog.

### EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

Ellen Lee DeGeneres was born on January 26, 1958, in Metairie, Louisiana, a suburb of New Orleans. She has fond memories of the city where she spent most of her childhood, and once told New Orleans Magazine, I rode my bike everywhere. All over the campus [of Newcomb College]. All over uptown. You know, people can grow up in New Orleans without realizing how unique a city it is. I remember thinking that it was a really neat place.

Her father, Elliott DeGeneres, was an insurance salesman and her mother, Betty DeGeneres, was a real-estate agent; they divorced when she was 13 years old. It was after the divorce in 1974 that, according to People magazine, Ellen and her mother moved from New Orleans to the small town of Atlanta, Texas. Ellens older brother, Vance, stayed to live with their father.

Ellen remembers this time finding a closeness with her mother as they dealt with the sadness or the divorce. She was also quoted in the St. James Encyclopedia of Popular Culture saying that she often used comedy to help her mom feel better. My mother was going through some really hard times and I could see when she was really getting down, and I would start to make fun of her dancing," she said. Then shed start to laugh and I'd make fun of her laughing. And shed laugh so hard shed start to cry, and then Id make fun of that. So I would totally bring her from where I'd seen her start going into depression to all the way out of it.

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## CHAPTER OUTLINE

Biography On Ellen Degeneres

+ Introduction: Ellen DeGeneres

+ Background and Upbringing

+ Major Accomplishments and Awards

+ Personal Life

+ ...and much more

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