

I'm 13 years old and did this research paper for my 7th grade honors english class. I hope you include it in your website.

Shirley Jane Temple Black was born on April 23, 1923 in Los Angeles, California. Her family included her father, her mother, and her two brothers. Her father was George Temple. He was employed by Southern California Edison electric utility (Black 2). Her brothers were John and George. John Temple was twelve years older and George Temple was seven years older than she (Haskins 3-4). Black's mother wanted to be a dancer herself, but she never had the body for it (Black 2). She believed that if she looked at beautiful paintings, listened to gorgeous music, and read wonderful books, then her child would grow to be a beautiful, gorgeous, wonderful girl. Black's mother also enrolled her into dance lessons when Black was very young (Haskins 3-4).

The dance studio where Black started where training was Meglin, a studio that was well-known in the Los Angeles area. In her classes, they would start the beginners with tap dance. As the students became better at their dancing, they learned dances such as the waltz, Charleston, tango, and rumba. Many times talent scouts would try to find new talent at Meglin. One day when Black was there, some scouts were casting for a series of short films starring very young children. A scout noticed a flair in Black and set her up for an interview. She was eventually cast for a role. These short films were called War Babies. The movies were take-offs of big-budget films. Black starred as the "leading lady" in each of these films (Black 14).

After Black made all of the "War Babies" films, she received a contract from the Fox movie production company. Black was only five years old. Sometimes studios lied about the actors' ages, so they made it seem as though Black was really only four years old. They figured that if she was cute and adorable at age five, she would be even more cute and adorable to the public if she was believed to be only four (Black 14).

To learn her lines, Black's mother would read the lines to her. Her mother would tell her when her cues were, or when it was her turn to speak (Harris 32). Black would even learn the lines of the other actors; with her mother's coaching. Black learned the scripts so thoroughly that, while they were shooting the scenes, she would stop to correct the other actors if they miss-read their lines (Haskins 22-23). Some of the most famous films that Black made were: Stand Up and Cheer (1934), Little Miss Marker (1934), Baby Take a Bow (1934), Bright Eyes (1934), Curly Top (1935), and Heidi (1937) (Black 520-522).

Every time that Black would catch a cold, or the slightest sickness, the studio would send her to Palm Springs to rest and recuperate. Black was not even allowed to play with other children her age. The studio was worried that she might get hurt. While Black was acting in "Bright Eyes," her child co-star wished to play with her. However, the director of the movie would not allow it. The co-star noticed that Black sometimes seemed lonely and unhappy (Haskins 20-22). When Black was just six years old, she earned \$2,500 a week starring in movies (Encyclopedia 1). Shortly after Fox put Black under contract, her family purchased a huge house. This house had a swimming pool, badminton court, merry-go-round, playhouse, and bowling alley (Haskins 24). Obviously, Black did not have a typical childhood.

Black had only been with Fox for about one year in 1935. At the box office, however, Black was ranked number one, meaning that she was the actor who more people came to see than anyone else. She was internationally popular. On one of Black's birthdays, she even received over 135,000 gifts from fans all around the world. On a regular basis, she received a great deal of fan mail. She received so many letters that she never had a chance to read each one of them. However, she did try to do it. During the Great Depression, Black was at the height of her acting career. Since movies were only \$.15 a show, many people could afford to enjoy seeing her act in movies. They would come to see the movies as a way of lifting their spirits during a dark time in the nation's history (Haskins 15-16).

On February 27, 1935, Black became the first child actor to receive an Academy Award. Black was not given the award for one performance, but for all of the great work that she had done. Her Oscar was not the normal size; it was smaller. The Motion Picture Academy did this as a joke since Black was such a small actress. This was somewhat ironic, because Black was bringing in more money than several of the actors who received the normal-sized award (Haskins 20-22)!

As Black began to mature, she became a little bit chubby, and her ringlets no longer fit her maturing face. Once Black started to grow up, Fox did not have as many roles for her. She was too old to play a child and too young to play a teenager. Black was even offered the role as Dorothy in "The Wizard of Oz," but Fox would not let her act for other studios (Haskins 33-34). In 1947, she co-starred with a young Ronald Reagan in That Hagan Girl. Many people did not want to see Black grow up and become an adult. The previews for this movie showed Black kissing a man. The audiences didn't like this, so Fox cut it out of the previews (Black 242).

While Black was younger, a tutor would come and teach her. Later, in 1940, Black enrolled in Westlake School for Girls. This school was a very prestigious private school in Beverly Hills, California. Many of the other students did not accept her at first. They thought that she would be stuck-up and rude. They later grew to enjoy her company and realized that she was really not stuck-up or rude at all. After a year or two in school, Fox asked Black if she would like to continue going to school, or if she would like to start acting again. Black eagerly wanted to act again, so she left Westlake School, and received tutoring again (Haskins 34).

When Black was just fifteen years old, she met John Agar, a twenty-two year old Army Air Corps private. It was love at first sight or the two. They married when Black was seventeen, in 1945. Black wanted to continue making movies. Agar decided that he would like to make movies, too. Agar was arrested many times for drunk driving. The couple later divorced, in 1950, two years after having a daughter, Susan ("America's," video).

Black was on a vacation later in 1950, when she met Charles Black. The two fell madly in love and married on December 16, 1950. Black did not make any more movies after she married for the second time. She wanted to raise a family with her husband instead. Later, the couple had two more children. The children were named Lori and Charlie ("America's," video).

About seventeen years after their marriage, Black ran for the United States Congress. Although she lost, she caught the eye of then president Richard Nixon. Nixon named her a United States delegate for the United Nations General Assembly (Smith 1). Some people complained about Black's lack of experience, but many people defended her because of her love for people. Black was assigned to committees on the environment, youth, refugees, and peaceful uses of outer space. Later, Black became very interested in Africa. She felt that America was not giving enough attention to the continent (Haskins 48-49).

One day while she was still a delegate for the United Nations, Black found a lump in her breast. The lump was not malignant, so it did not spread to anywhere else in her body (Smith 1).

While Gerald Ford was president, Black learned that she had been appointed to the job of Ambassador to Ghana. Black went out and visited many Ghanaians. She did a great deal of work to help make life in Ghana easier (Haskins 52-54). In 1989, Black was appointed to be the Ambassador to Czechoslovakia by former President George Bush. Black helped to make Czechoslovakia a better place to live, too.

Currently Black is enjoying being a grandmother. She has retired from her United Nations position. She has become involved with service activities. She donates some of her money to the search for a cure for Multiple Sclerosis. Her brother was crippled from the disease (Smith 1).

