

East Central celebrates deaf history and promotes awareness of American deaf culture.

NATIONAL DEAF HISTORY MONTH

March 13 - April 15, 2021

#PROUDLYUNITED

MARLEE MATLIN

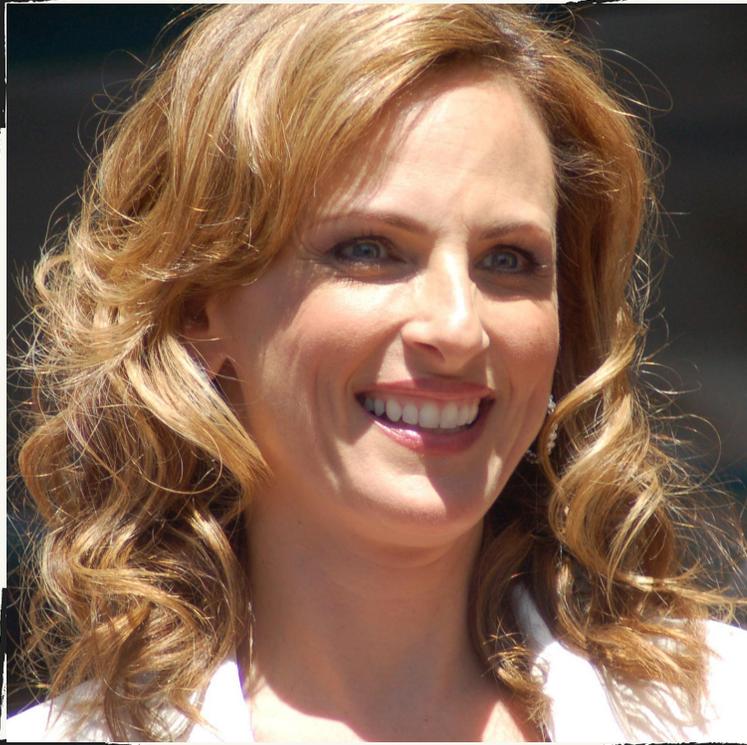
Actress, Author and Activist

Marlee Beth Matlin (born August 24, 1965) is an American actress, author, and activist. She won the Academy Award for Best Actress for *Children of a Lesser God* (1986) and to date is the only deaf performer to have won an Academy Award.

Having won the award at the age of 21, she is also the youngest winner in the category.

Her work in film and television has resulted in a Golden Globe award, with two additional nominations, and four Emmy nominations. Deaf since she was 18 months old, due to illness and high fevers, she is also a prominent member of the National Association of the Deaf.

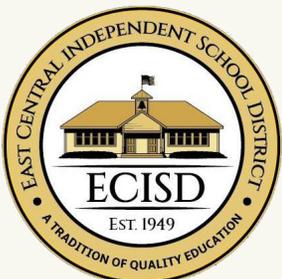
Matlin is actively involved with a number of charitable organizations, including Easter Seals (where she was appointed an Honorary board member), the Children Affected by AIDS Foundation, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, VSA arts, and the Red Cross Celebrity Cabinet. She was appointed by President Clinton in 1994 to the Corporation for National Service and served as chair of National Volunteer Week. Matlin was a participant in the first-ever national television advertising campaign supporting donations to Jewish federations. The program featured "film and television personalities celebrating their Jewish heritage and promoting charitable giving to the Jewish community" and included Greg Grunberg, Joshua Malina, Kevin Weisman, and Jonathan Silverman.



Angela George

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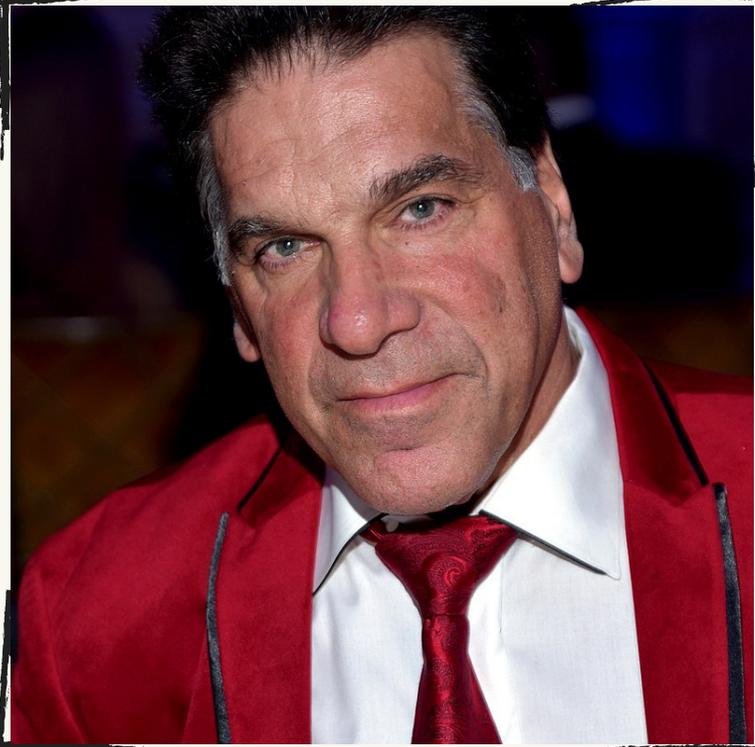
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LOU FERRIGNO

Actor and Bodybuilder

You wouldn't like him when he is angry!

The original "Incredible Hulk," Louis Jude Ferrigno Sr. (born November 9, 1951)[1] is an American actor, fitness trainer, fitness consultant, and retired professional bodybuilder. As a bodybuilder, Ferrigno won an IFBB Mr. America title and two consecutive IFBB Mr. Universe titles, and appeared in the bodybuilding documentary *Pumping Iron*. As an actor, he is best known for his title role in the CBS television series *The Incredible Hulk* and vocally reprising the role in subsequent animated and computer-generated incarnations. He has also appeared in European-produced fantasy-adventures such as *Sinbad of the Seven Seas* and *Hercules*, and as himself in the sitcom *The King of Queens* and the 2009 comedy *I Love You, Man*.



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Soon after he was born, Ferrigno says he believes he suffered a series of ear infections and lost 75 to 80% of his hearing, though his condition was not diagnosed until he was three years old. Hearing loss caused Ferrigno to be bullied by peers during his childhood.

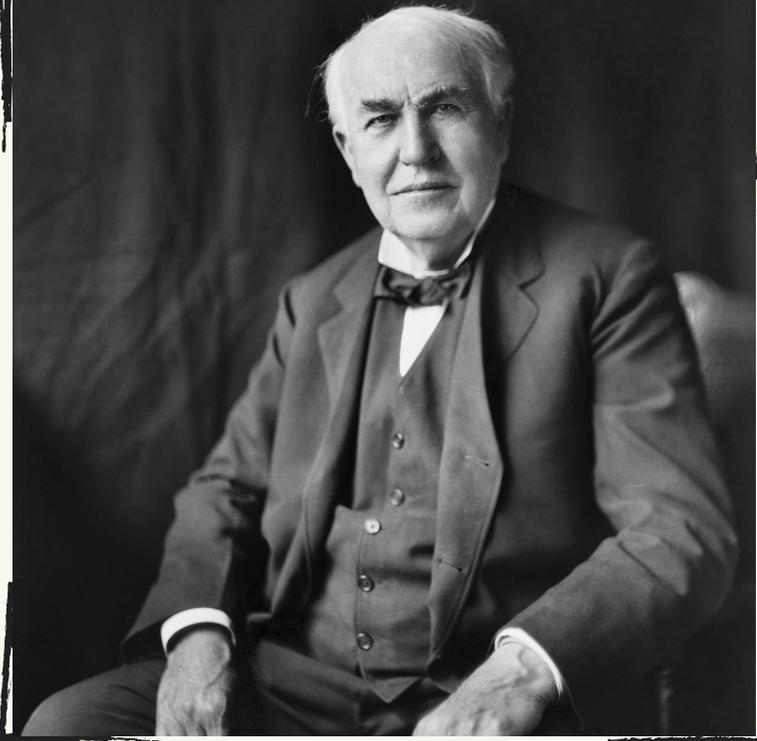
Ferrigno started weight training at age 13. Because he could not afford to buy weights, he made his own using a broomstick and pails which he partially filled with cement. He and Arnold Schwarzenegger would compete against each other and become the most famous bodybuilders in the world.



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THOMAS EDISON

Inventor and Businessman



Louis Bachrach, Bachrach Studios, restored by Michel Vuijsteke

Thomas Alva Edison (February 11, 1847 – October 18, 1931) was an American inventor and businessman who has been described as America's greatest inventor. He developed many devices in fields such as electric power generation, mass communication, sound recording, and motion pictures. These inventions, which include the phonograph, the motion picture camera, and early versions of the electric light bulb, have had a widespread impact on the modern industrialized world. He was one of the first inventors to apply the principles of organized science and teamwork to the process of invention, working with many researchers and employees. He established the first industrial research laboratory.

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Thomas Edison was totally deaf in one ear and hard of hearing in the other. Edison developed hearing problems at the age of 12. The cause of his deafness has been attributed to a bout of scarlet fever during childhood and recurring untreated middle-ear infections. It is alleged that Edison would listen to a music player or piano by clamping his teeth into the wood to absorb the sound waves into his skull. As he got older, Edison believed his hearing loss allowed him to avoid distraction and concentrate more easily on his work. Modern-day historians and medical professionals have suggested he may have had ADHD. He called himself a "two-shift man" because he worked 16 out of every 24 hours. Sometimes he worked so intensely that his wife had to remind him to sleep and eat.



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MICHELLE BANKS

Actress, Writer, Director

Michelle Banks is an award-winning, African-American deaf performer who founded Onyx Theatre Company in New York City—the first deaf theater company in the United States for people of color.

After Michelle received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Drama Studies from the State University of New York at Purchase, she founded Onyx Theatre Company in New York City, the first deaf theater company in the United States for people of color. Her work with Onyx for eleven years earned the Cultural Enrichment Award from Gallaudet University and the Distinguished Service Award from New York Deaf Theatre. She also has taught drama/theatre for NYC's Board of Education – Deaf and Hard of Hearing programs and PS 47 School for the Deaf for four years. Her other achievements include Program Coordinator for Deaf West Theatre's Professional Acting Summer School, Sign Master for Arena Stage, Broadway, and Centerstage, Outstanding Achievement Recognition Resolution of 1996 from the Council of the District of Columbia, an Individual Achievement Award from the National Council on Communicative Disorders, and a featured article in the February 1998 issue of ESSENCE magazine.

As an actress, she has appeared in *Compensation*, *Soul Food*, *Girlfriends*, *10-8* and *Strong Medicine*. St



<http://www.michelleabanks.com/bio>

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HELEN KELLER

Actress, Writer, Director

Helen Adams Keller (June 27, 1880 – June 1, 1968) was an American author, disability rights advocate, political activist and lecturer. Born in West Tuscumbia, Alabama, she lost her sight and hearing after a bout of illness at the age of nineteen months. She then communicated primarily using home signs until the age of seven when she met her first teacher and life-long companion Anne Sullivan, who taught her language, including reading and writing; Sullivan's first lessons involved spelling words on Keller's hand to show her the names of objects around her. She also learned how to speak and to understand other people's speech using the Tadoma method. After an education at both specialist and mainstream schools, she attended Radcliffe College of Harvard University and became the first deafblind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree. She worked for the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) from 1924 until 1968, during which time she toured the United States and traveled to 39 countries around the globe advocating for those with vision loss.

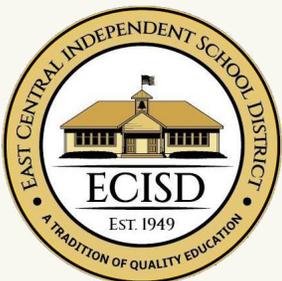
Keller was a prolific author, writing 14 books and hundreds of speeches and essays on topics ranging from animals to Mahatma Gandhi. Keller campaigned for those with disabilities, for women's suffrage, labor rights, and world peace. She joined the Socialist Party of America in 1909. She was a supporter of the NAACP and an original member of the American Civil Liberties Union.



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