

Queen Latifah



Dana Elaine Owens (born March 18, 1970), better known by her stage name **Queen Latifah**, is an American singer, songwriter, rapper, actress, model, television producer, record producer, comedienne, and talk show hostess. She has long been considered one of hip-hop's pioneer feminists. Her work in music, film, and television has earned her a Golden Globe award, two Screen Actors Guild Awards, two Image Awards, a Grammy Award, six additional Grammy nominations, an Emmy Award nomination and an Academy Award nomination.

Latifah was born in Newark, New Jersey, and lived primarily in East Orange, New Jersey. She is the daughter of Rita (née Bray), a teacher at Irvington High School (Latifah's alma mater) and Lancelot Owens, Sr., a police officer. Her parents divorced when Latifah was ten. Latifah was raised in the Baptist faith and attended Catholic school in Newark,

New Jersey. Her stage name, Latifah (لطيفة laṭīfa), meaning "delicate" and "very kind" in Arabic, she found in an Arabic book of names when she was eight. Always a tall girl, the 5'10" Latifah was a power forward on her high school girls basketball team. She performed the number "Home" from the musical *The Wiz* in a high school play.

Music career

Beginning (1988–1989)

She started beat boxing for the hip-hop group Ladies Fresh and was one of the members of the original version of the Flavor Unit, which, at that time, was a crew of MCs grouped around producer DJ King Gemini, who made a demo recording of Queen Latifah's rap *Princess of the Posse*. He gave the recording to Fab 5 Freddy, the host of *Yo! MTV Raps*. The song got the attention of Tommy Boy Music employee Dante Ross, who signed Latifah and in 1988 issued her first single, "Wrath of My Madness".

Rapping (1989–2002)

Latifah made her mark in Hip-Hop by rapping about issues of black women. Her songs covered topics on domestic violence, harassment on the streets, and relationship problems. Freddy helped Latifah sign with Tommy Boy Records, which released Latifah's first album *All Hail the Queen* in 1989, when she was nineteen. That year, she appeared as Referee on the UK label Music of Life album 1989 — *The Hustlers Convention* (live). In 1998, co-produced by Ro Smith, now CEO of Def Ro Inc., she released her fourth hip-hop album *Order in the Court*, which was released by Motown Records. Latifah was also a member of the hip hop collective Native Tongues.

Singing (2003–2007)

After *Order in the Court*, Latifah shifted primarily to singing soul music and jazz standards, which she had used sparingly in her previous hip-hop-oriented records. In 2004, she released the soul/jazz standards *The Dana Owens Album*. On July 11, 2007, Latifah sang at the famed Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles as the headlining act in a live jazz concert. Before a crowd of more than 12,400, she was backed by a 10-piece live orchestra and three backup vocalists, which was billed as the Queen Latifah Orchestra. Latifah performed

new arrangements of standards including "California Dreaming", first made popular by 1960s icons The Mamas & the Papas. Later in 2007, Latifah released an album titled *Trav'lin' Light*. Jill Scott, Erykah Badu, Joe Sample, George Duke, Christian McBride, and Stevie Wonder made guest appearances. It was nominated for a Grammy in the "Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album" category.

In 2009, Latifah, along with the NJPAC Jubilation Choir,^[17] recorded the title track on the album *Oh, Happy Day: An All-Star Music Celebration*, covering the song that the Edwin Hawkins Singers made popular in 1969.

Return to hip hop (2008–present)

In 2008, Latifah was asked if she would make another hip-hop album. She was quoted saying the album was done already and it would be called "All Hail the Queen II". The following year, in 2009, she released her album *Persona*. The song "Cue the Rain" was released as the album's lead single. She also has a song with Missy Elliott. 2011 saw Queen Latifah sing "Who Can I Turn To" in a duet with Tony Bennett for his album *"Duets II"*. In January 2012, while appearing on *106 & Park* with Dolly Parton, to promote *Joyful Noise*, Latifah stated that she had been working on a new album.

Film and television

Early career (1991–2001)

From 1993–1998, Latifah had a starring role on *Living Single*, the FOX sitcom, which gained high ratings among black audiences; she also wrote and performed its theme music. Her mother Rita played her mother on-screen. She began her film career in supporting roles in the 1991 and 1992 films *House Party 2*, *Juice* and *Jungle Fever*. She had her own talk show, *The Queen Latifah Show*, from 1999 to 2001. She also had recurring roles during the second season (1991–1992) of the NBC hit *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. She made a guest role as herself on *Hangin' with Mr. Cooper* in 1993. Latifah appeared in the 1996 box-office hit, *Set It Off* and subsequently had a supporting role in the Holly Hunter film *Living Out Loud* (1998). She played the role of Thelma in the 1999 movie *The Bone Collector*, alongside Denzel Washington and Angelina Jolie.

Mainstream success (2002–present)

Queen Latifah performing at the "Kids Inaugural: We Are the Future" concert in 2009

Although Latifah had previously received some critical acclaim, she gained mainstream success after being cast as Matron "Mama" Morton in *Chicago*, a musical film that subsequently won the Academy Award for Best Picture. Latifah herself received the nomination for Best Supporting Actress for her role, but lost to co-star Catherine Zeta-Jones. Latifah is one of three hip-hop artists to receive an Academy Award nomination in an acting category. The others are Will Smith (Best Actor, *Ali*, 2001, and Best Actor, *The Pursuit of Happyness*, 2006), and Jamie Foxx, (Best Actor, *Ray*, and Best Supporting Actor *Collateral*, both in 2004, also winning the first).

In 2003, she starred with Steve Martin in the film *Bringing Down the House*, which was a major success at the box office. She also recorded a song "Do Your Thing" for the soundtrack. Since then, she has had both leading and supporting roles in a multitude of films that received varied critical and box office receptions, including films such as *Scary Movie 3*, *Barbershop 2: Back in Business*, *Taxi*, *Kung Faux*, *Beauty Shop*, and *Hairspray*. In early 2006, Latifah appeared in a romantic comedy/drama entitled *Last Holiday*. Film critic Richard Roeper stated that "this is the Queen Latifah performance I've been waiting for ever since she broke into movies". Also in 2006, Latifah voiced Ellie, a friendly mammoth, in the animated film, *Ice Age: The Meltdown* (her first voice appearance in an animated film), and appeared in the drama *Stranger Than Fiction*.

The summer of 2007 brought Latifah triple success in the big-screen version of the Broadway smash hit *Hairspray*, in which she acted, sang, and danced. The film rated highly with critics. It starred, among

others, John Travolta, Michelle Pfeiffer, Allison Janney, James Marsden, Christopher Walken, and Zac Efron. Also in 2007, she portrayed an HIV-positive woman in the film *Life Support*, a role for which she garnered her first Golden Globe Award, Screen Actors Guild Award and an Emmy nomination. For her work, Queen Latifah received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, on January 4, 2006, located at 6915 Hollywood Blvd.

Latifah produced the 2007 film *The Perfect Holiday*. In addition to producing the film, Latifah starred alongside Terrence Howard, Morris Chestnut, Gabrielle Union, Charles Q. Murphy, Jill Marie Jones, and Faizon Love. In 2008, Latifah appeared in the crime comedy *Mad Money* opposite Academy Award-winner Diane Keaton as well as Katie Holmes and Ted Danson. She appeared on *Saturday Night Live* on October 4, 2008, as moderator Gwen Ifill impersonator in a comedic sketch depicting the recent vice-presidential debate. In 2009, Latifah was a presenter at the 81st Academy Awards, presenting the segment honoring film professionals who had died during 2008 and singing "I'll Be Seeing You" during the montage. Latifah spoke at Michael Jackson's memorial service in Los Angeles. She also hosted the 2010 People's Choice Awards. Latifah sang America the Beautiful at Super Bowl XLIV hosted in Miami, Florida on February 7, 2010, with Carrie Underwood. Latifah hosted the 2010 BET Awards on June 27, 2010. She starred with Dolly Parton in *Joyful Noise* (2012). In June 2011, Latifah received an honorary doctorate degree in Humane Letters from Delaware State University in Dover, Delaware. On September 16, 2013, Latifah premiered her own syndicated daytime television show titled *The Queen Latifah Show*. On January 26, 2014, Latifah officiated the weddings of 33 same-sex and opposite-sex couples during a performance of "Same Love" by Macklemore at the 56th Annual Grammy Awards.

Products and Endorsements

Latifah is a celebrity spokesperson for CoverGirl cosmetics, Curvation ladies underwear, Pizza Hut and Jenny Craig. She represents her own line of cosmetics for women of color called the CoverGirl Queen Collection. Latifah has also launched a perfume line called "Queen" and "Queen of Hearts."

Personal life

Raised in East Orange, New Jersey, Latifah has been a resident of Colts Neck, New Jersey; Wayne, New Jersey; and Beverly Hills, California. Latifah's older brother, Lancelot Jr., was killed in 1992 in an accident involving a motorcycle that Latifah had recently bought him. Latifah still wears the key to the motorcycle around her neck, visible throughout her performance in her sitcom *Living Single*. She also dedicated *Black Reign* to him. In her 1999 autobiography, *Ladies First: Revelations of a Strong Woman*, Latifah discussed how her brother's death had led to a bout of depression and drug abuse, from which she later recovered. In 1995, Latifah was the victim of a carjacking, which also resulted in the shooting of her boyfriend, Sean Moon.

In 1996, she was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana and possession of a loaded handgun. In 2002, she was arrested for driving under the influence in Los Angeles County. She was placed on three years' probation after being convicted. In early 2003, Latifah had breast reduction surgery which downsized her F size breasts to a DD cup size, as a way to reduce back and shoulder pain. She also works out with a trainer and kickboxes. Latifah was asked by Maya Angelou, who was unable to attend, to recite a poem written by Angelou at the memorial service for Michael Jackson in July 2009.

Feud with Foxy Brown

Disagreements between Foxy Brown and Queen Latifah ensued in mid-1996, where media reports indicated that Brown was a prime target in Latifah's diss record "Name Callin'," which was featured in the movie soundtrack *Set It Off*. In response, Brown made allegations of Latifah "checking her out" at musical events and had even gone further to question Latifah's sexuality in various public radio interviews. In 1998, Brown released a diss record titled "10% Dis," where she continually questioned Latifah's sexuality and accused her of being jealous.

By late spring of 1998, Latifah responded to Brown through another diss record titled, "Name Callin' Part II." In the record, Latifah disses Brown about her heavy reliance on sex-appeal, in which she implies that Brown has to rely on skimpy outfits to hide her "half-assed flow." Foxy Brown retaliated via a response-diss record titled "Talk to Me," in which Brown made fun of the ratings of Latifah's television talk show and went on to make various homophobic remarks to both Latifah and then-newcomer Queen Pen.

A significant part of media dubbed Latifah as "the winner" of the feud. Hip-hop magazine *ego trip* stated that Latifah won the feud with her diss record "Name Callin' Part II" and added that she showed that "the lady's still first," in reference to Latifah's 1990 single, "Ladies First." In 2000, Brown and Latifah reconciled; to show truce, Brown performed her song "Na Na Be Like" on The Queen Latifah Show.

Discography

- 1989: [All Hail the Queen](#)
- 1991: [Nature of a Sista](#)
- 1993: [Black Reign](#)
- 1998: [Order in the Court](#)
- 2004: [The Dana Owens Album](#)
- 2007: [Trav'lin' Light](#)
- 2009: [Persona](#)

Tours

Queen Latifah, Jill Scott and Erykah Badu joined together to create and own the rights to the Sugar Water Festival Tour, LLC. All three singers toured together, while inviting music duo Floetry in 2005 and singer Kelis in 2006 as opening acts. Comedian/actress Mo'Nique served as host for the 2006 Sugar Water Tour.

- [Sugar Water Festival Tour](#) (2005–06)
- [Travlin' Light Tour](#) (2007)

Filmography

Film

Year	Film	Role	Notes
1991	Jungle Fever	Waitress	

Year	Film	Role	Notes
1991	<u>House Party 2</u>	Zora	
1992	<u>Juice</u>	Ruffhouse M.C.	
1993	<u>Who's the Man?</u>		Cameo role
1993	<u>My Life</u>	Theresa	
1996	<u>Set It Off</u>	Cleopatra 'Cleo' Sims	<u>American Black Film Festival</u> Award for Best Actress Nominated — <u>Independent Spirit Award for Best Supporting Female</u> Nominated — <u>NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture</u>
1997	<u>Hoodlum</u>	Sulie	
1998	<u>Living Out Loud</u>	Liz Bailey	Nominated — <u>NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture</u>
1998	<u>Sphere</u>	Alice "Teeny" Fletcher	
1999	<u>The Bone Collector</u>	Thelma	Nominated — <u>Black Reel Award</u> for Theatrical – Best Supporting Actress Nominated — <u>NAACP Image Award for</u>

Year	Film	Role	Notes
			<u>Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture</u>
1999	<u>Bringing Out the Dead</u>	Dispatcher Love	
2002	<u>Chicago</u>	Matron "Mama" Morton	<u>BET Award for Best Actress</u> <u>Black Reel Awards</u> for Theatrical – Best Supporting Actress <u>Broadcast Film Critics Association Award for Best Cast</u> <u>Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture</u> Nominated — <u>Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress</u> Nominated — <u>BAFTA Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role</u> Nominated — <u>Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actress – Motion Picture</u> Nominated — <u>MTV Movie Award for Best Female Performance</u> Nominated — <u>Phoenix Film Critics Society Award for Best Cast</u> Nominated — <u>Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Supporting Role</u> Nominated — <u>Teen Choice Award</u> for Choice Movie Actress Nominated — Teen Choice Award for Movie Breakout Star

Year	Film	Role	Notes
2002	<u>Roberto Benigni's Pinocchio</u>	Dove (English voice)	
2002	<u>Brown Sugar</u>	Francine	<u>BET Award for Best Actress</u> Nominated — <u>NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture</u>
2002	<u>The Country Bears</u>	Cha-Cha	
2003	<u>Scary Movie 3</u>	Aunt Shaneequa/The Oracle	
2003	<u>Bringing Down the House</u>	Charlene Morton	Producer <u>BET Award for Best Actress</u> <u>NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture</u> <u>Teen Choice Award</u> for Choice Movie Actress - Comedy Nominated — <u>BET Award</u> for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Box Office Movie Nominated — <u>Black Reel Award for Best Actress</u> Nominated — <u>Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Award</u> for Favorite Movie Actress Nominated — <u>MTV Movie Award for Best Female Performance</u> Nominated — <u>MTV Movie Award for Best Fight</u> (shared with <u>Missi Pyle</u>) Nominated — <u>Teen Choice Award</u> for Choice

Year	Film	Role	Notes
			Movie Breakout Star - Female Nominated — Teen Choice Award for Choice Movie Chemistry (shared with Eugene Levy)
2004	Taxi	Belle	Nominated — BET Award for Best Actress
2004	The Cookout	Security Guard	Also producer Nominated — BET Award for Best Actress Nominated — BET Award for Outstanding Writing for a Theatrical Film
2005	Barbershop 2: Back in Business	Gina Norris	BET Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Box Office Movie Nominated — Teen Choice Award for Choice Movie Actress - Comedy
2005	Beauty Shop	Gina Norris	Producer Nominated — BET Award for Best Actress Nominated — BET Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Theatrical Film Nominated — Black Movie Award for Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role Nominated — Black Reel Award for Film – Best Actress Nominated — NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture Nominated — Teen Choice Award for Choice Movie Actress: Comedy Nominated — Teen Choice Award for Choice Movie Hissy Fit Nominated — Teen Choice Award for Choice Rap Artist in a Movie
2006	Stranger than Fiction	Penny Escher	
2006	Ice Age: The Meltdown	Ellie	Voice

Year	Film	Role	Notes
			<u>Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Award</u> for Favorite Voice from an Animated Movie Nominated — <u>BET Award for Best Actress</u>
2006	<u>Last Holiday</u>	Georgia Byrd	Nominated — <u>BET Award for Best Actress</u> Nominated — <u>Black Movie Award</u> for Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role Nominated — <u>NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture</u> Nominated — <u>Teen Choice Award</u> for Movies - Choice Actress: Comedy Nominated — <u>Teen Choice Award</u> for Movies - Choice Liplock (shared with <u>LL Cool J</u>)
2007	<u>Hairspray</u>	Motormouth Maybelle	<u>Broadcast Film Critics Association Award for Best Cast</u> <u>Hollywood Film Festival Award</u> for Best Ensemble Cast <u>Palm Springs International Film Festival</u> for Ensemble Cast Award Nominated — <u>BET Award for Best Actress</u> Nominated — <u>Broadcast Film Critics Association Award for Best Song</u> Nominated — <u>NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture</u> Nominated — <u>Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture</u>
2007	<u>The Perfect Holiday</u>	Mrs. Christmas	Producer Nominated — <u>BET Award for Best Actress</u>
2008	<u>Mad Money</u>	Nina Brewster	Nominated — <u>BET Award for Best Actress</u>
2008	<u>What Happens in Vegas...</u>	Dr. Twitchell	

Year	Film	Role	Notes
2008	<u>The Secret Life of Bees</u>	August Boatwright	<u>Black Reel Award</u> for Best Actress <u>Hollywood Film Festival Award</u> for Best Ensemble Cast Nominated — <u>Black Reel Award</u> for Best Ensemble Nominated — <u>NAACP Image Award</u> for <u>Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture</u>
2009	<u>Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs</u>	Ellie	Voice role
2010	<u>Valentine's Day</u>	Paula Thomas	Nominated — <u>Teen Choice Award</u> for Movie Actress Romantic Comedy
2010	<u>Just Wright</u>	Leslie Wright	Producer Nominated — <u>Black Reel Award</u> for Best Actress Nominated — <u>Black Reel Award</u> for Best Original or Adapted Song (for the song "Champion") Nominated — <u>NAACP Image Award</u> for <u>Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture</u> Nominated — <u>Teen Choice Award</u> for Movie Actress Romantic Comedy
2011	<u>The Dilemma</u>	Susan Warner	
2012	<u>Ice Age: Continental Drift</u>	Ellie	Voice
2012	<u>Joyful Noise</u>	Vi Rose Hill	
2013	House of Bodies	Nicole	Executive Producer Netflix Instant Exclusive

Television film[\[edit\]](#)

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1998	<u>Mama Flora's Family</u>	Diana	
2002	<u>Living with the Dead</u>	Midge Harmon	Nominated — <u>Satellite Award for Best Supporting Actress – Series, Miniseries or Television Film</u>
2005	<u>The Muppets' Wizard of Oz</u>	<u>Aunt Em</u>	
2007	<u>Life Support</u>	Ana Wallace	Producer <u>Golden Globe Award for Best Actress – Miniseries or Television Film</u> <u>Gracie Allen Award for Outstanding Female Lead – Drama Series or Special</u> <u>NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actress in a Television Movie, Mini-Series or Dramatic Special</u> <u>Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Miniseries or Television Movie</u> Nominated — <u>Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress – Miniseries or a Movie</u> Nominated — <u>Prism Award</u> for Performance in a TV Movie or Miniseries Nominated — <u>Satellite Award for Best Actress – Miniseries or Television Film</u>
2012	<u>Steel Magnolias</u>	M'Lynn	

Television[\[edit\]](#)

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1991	<u>The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air</u>	Dee Dee / Marissa Redman	2 episodes
1993–1998	<u>Living Single</u>	<u>Khadijah James</u>	Lead Role Nominated — <u>NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture</u> (1996–98) Nominated — <u>Blimp Award for Favorite Television Actress</u> (1995–96)
1999–2001	<u>The Queen Latifah Show</u>	Host	Also Creator, Executive Producer
2001	<u>Spin City</u>	Robin Jones	1 episode
2004	<u>Eve</u>	Simone	1 episode
2004	<u>The Fairly OddParents</u>	Pam Dromeda	1 episode
2005	<u>47th Annual Grammy Awards</u>	Host	TV Special
2008	Sweet Blackberry Presents		1 episode
2008	<u>Entourage</u>	Herself	1 episode

Year	Title	Role	Notes
2010	<u>30 Rock</u>	Regina Bookman	2 episodes
2011– 2012	<u>Single Ladies</u>	Sharon Love	Recurring; 4 episodes Also Executive Producer
2012	<u>Let's Stay Together</u>	Bobbie	1 episode Also Executive Producer
2013– present	<u>The Queen Latifah Show</u>	Host	Also Creator, Executive Producer
