

Famous Kinship Families: Part One

Famous children raised by kinship families and their caregivers

Most of the persons below were raised by kinship caregivers – with examples of grandparents, aunts and uncles, and fictive kin being represented. There is also one story (Dwayne Wade) of a famous individual who is raising a relative as a kinship caregiver, and of course, there is George Washington, who raised Martha Washington’s two grandchildren.



Barack Obama

Obama was born in Hawaii in 1961 to Stanley Ann Dunham of Kansas and Barack Obama, Sr., who was from Kenya. The couple met as students at the University of Hawaii and soon married, Barack was born shortly after. However, the parents separated when Obama’s mother moved to Seattle to attend college. In 1964 the parents divorced. Barack's mother Stanley Ann remarried to Lolo Soetoro, another student from the University of Hawaii, who soon returned to his birthplace in Indonesia. A few months later in 1967, she and Barack joined him there. From the of age six until he was ten, Barack lived and was educated in Indonesia. When he returned to the United States, he lived with his maternal grandparents, Stanley and Madelyn (known as “Toot” by Barack and his sister) Dunham, in Hawaii from 1971 to 1979. Barack's father came to visit him once in 1971 and then Barack never saw him again. His father died in a car accident in 1981.

His mother and sister returned to Hawaii in 1972 and young Barack lived with them for the next three years. In 1975 his mother took his sister back to Indonesia and this time Barack chose to stay in Hawaii with his grandparents.



Bill Clinton

His father was a traveling salesman who died in an automobile accident three months before Bill was born. His mother traveled to New Orleans to study nursing soon after he was born. She left Bill with her parents Eldridge and Edith Cassidy. In 1950, Bill’s mother returned from nursing school and married Roger Clinton, Sr.



George Washington

The Father of our Nation had no children of his own. However, he and Martha were not childless. George and Martha were caregivers to many orphaned nieces and nephews, and most notably to Martha's grandchildren (and George's step-grandchildren), Eleanor Parke "Nellie" Custis and George Washington Parke "Washy" Custis.



Herbert Hoover

His father died in 1880. After working to retire her husband's debts, retain their life insurance, and care for the children, his mother died in 1884, leaving Hoover (age nine), his older brother, and his younger sister as orphans. After a brief stay with one of his grandmothers in Kingsley, Iowa, Hoover lived the next 18 months with his uncle Allen Hoover in West Branch. In November 1885, he went to Newberg, Oregon, to live with his uncle Dr. John Minthorn, a physician and businessman whose own son had died the year before.



Eleanor Roosevelt

Her mother died from diphtheria on December 7, 1892, and her brother, Elliott Jr. died of the same disease the following May. Her father, an alcoholic confined to a sanitarium, died on August 14, 1894. After the deaths of her parents, Eleanor was raised in the household of her maternal grandmother, Mary Livingston Ludlow of the Livingston family in Tivoli, New York.



Sandra Day O'Connor

She was born in El Paso, Texas, to Harry Day, a rancher, and Ada Wilkey. She grew up on a cattle ranch near Duncan, Arizona. For most of her early schooling, O'Connor lived in El Paso with her maternal grandmother, and attended public schools and the Radford School for Girls, a private school.



Jack Nicholson

Nicholson was born to June Nicholson. June had married Italian American showman Donald Furcillo six months earlier. Furcillo was already married. Although he reportedly offered to take care of the child, June's mother Ethel insisted that she bring up the baby, partly so that June could pursue her dancing career and partly because June was only 16 or 17 years old when she gave birth to Jack.



Carol Burnett

Burnett was born in San Antonio, Texas in 1933, the daughter of Ina Louise, a publicity writer for movie studios, and Joseph Burnett, a movie theater manager. Both of her parents suffered from alcoholism, and at a young age, she was left with her grandmother, Mabel White.

References

1. *Official Portrait, 2012*. 2012. <https://en.wikipedia.org/>,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:President_Barack_Obama.jpg.
2. *Official Portrait, 1993*. 1993. <https://en.wikipedia.org/>,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bill_Clinton.jpg.
3. Stuart, Gilbert. *Portrait based on the unfinished Athenaeum Portrait*. 1796.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/>,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gilbert_Stuart_Williamstown_Portrait_of_George_Washington.jpg.
4. *Hoover in 1928*. 1928. <https://en.wikipedia.org/>,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:President_Hoover_portrait.jpg.
5. *Roosevelt in July 1933*. July 1993. <https://en.wikipedia.org/>,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Eleanor_Roosevelt_portrait_1933.jpg.
6. <https://en.wikipedia.org/>,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sandra_Day_O%27Connor.jpg.
7. *Nicholson in 2001*. 2001. <https://en.wikipedia.org/>,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jack_Nicholson_2001.jpg.
8. *Burnett in 1974*. 1974. <https://en.wikipedia.org/>,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Carol_Burnett_-_1974.jpg.