

## Movie News: Golden Age Movie Star Lauren Bacall Dies at 89

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NEW YORK – She had it all. Just like Bogie and, well, her. Lauren “Betty” Bacall accidentally became a movie actress, but that accident led to stardom, two marriages to famous actors and a long life of award winning performances. The 89-year-old star died of a stroke in New York City on August 12th.

She thought her marriage to Humphrey Bogart – who was 26 years older than her – would be her epitaph, but Bacall had so much more going for her through her career, she forged ahead and established her own identity. In that second act, it was the stage that became her main calling, as she won Tony Awards for her lead performances in “Applause” and “Woman of the Year” on Broadway. Her husky voiced, independent style was broadly appealing, especially in her early co-starring roles with Bogart.



Bogie and Bacall in 'The Big Sleep'  
Photo credit: Warner Home Video

Lauren Bacall was born Betty Joan Perske in the Bronx in 1924. Of Jewish decent, she was first cousin to Shimon Peres, the ninth President of Israel. Her stunning good looks were perfect for modeling, and at 17 years old she landed on the cover of Harper's Bazaar magazine. Although she took acting lessons, she had no real ambition to move beyond modeling, until the wife of Hollywood director Howard Hawks saw her on the magazine cover, and urged her husband to screen test the then teenage Bacall – she had changed her last name to her

mother's surname – for his upcoming film “To Have and Have Not” (1944). She changed her first name to Lauren and won the role opposite Humphrey Bogart, and a star was born at the tender age of 19.

Bogie and Bacall's chemistry led to romance, but first Bogart had to divorce his third wife. Howard Hawks always felt that Bogart stole the mentor role from him, and famously said that Bogart “fell in love with the character she played, so she had to keep playing it the rest of her life.” But the couple made three more films together – “The Big Sleep,” “Dark Passage” and “Key Largo” – married in 1945, and settled into a domesticity that would produce two children, and would last until Bogart's death in 1957.

In the 1950s she kept working, playing notable parts in “Young Man with a Horn,” “How to Marry a Millionaire,” “Written on the Wind” and “Designing Woman.” Her film career waned after that decade, and she turned to the Broadway stage, where besides her two Tony winning roles she originated the comic part of Stephanie in “Cactus Flower,” which was played by Ingrid Bergman in the film version. She continued to work sporadically in films, and was paired with John Wayne for his last film in 1976, “The Shootist.”



Still Glamorous in ‘The Mirror Has Two Faces’

Photo credit: Columbia TriStar Home Video

In the interim, she got married again in 1961 – after a flamboyant and brief engagement to Frank Sinatra – to actor Jason Robards, and produced a son from that marriage, which ended in divorce in 1969. She never remarried after that, and in her later years became a beacon for the golden age of Hollywood and Bogart, but also began doing character roles in films like “Misery” “Dogville,” “Birth” and the Barbara Streisand-directed “The Mirror Has Two Faces.” In the latter film, she won the 1996 Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actress, and was expected to repeat at the Oscars, but was famously surprised when Juliette Binoche won for “The English Patient” (she received an honorary Oscar in 2010). She also made a cameo on an episode of “The Sopranos,” portraying herself as a robbery victim.

She is survived by her three children, Stephen Humphrey Bogart, Leslie Bogart and the actor Sam Robards. She passed away in her New York City apartment in the Dakota Building, the infamous location of John Lennon's shooting.

Although Lauren Bacall was a woman known for her famous past, she liked to live in the now. “You realize yourself when you start reflecting – because I don't live in the past, although your past is so much a part of what you are – that you can't ignore it. But I don't look at scrapbooks.” and “Legends are all to do with the past and nothing to do with the present.”

Source material for this article came from Wikipedia, and CNN.com. Lauren Bacall, 1924-2014.



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