

Famous Mobilians

Listed here are only a few of Mobile's more notable figures, residents, artists, business leaders and others that are either from Mobile or who have become synonymous with the city. If you have someone you would like to nominate to be included on this site please submit a few sentences about them, include a picture, and e-mail to vanessa-washington@mobile.org.

THE ARTS



Jimmy Buffett

A popular Singer, songwriter, and author Jimmy Buffett was raised in Mobile. Buffett enjoyed his peak record-selling years between 1977-79 having three top 40 hits (Changes' title track, "Cheeseburger In Paradise" and "Fins") as well as one platinum (Son Of A Son Of A Sailor) and two gold (You Had To Be There: Jimmy Buffet In Concert and Volcano) albums in that time span. Buffett continues to make headlines as one of the biggest concert draws when he tours. "What gets so surreal to me is that I figured this was going to peak some time ago," he told a reporter. "I thought everybody would start going to somebody else's shows. But it hasn't happened."



Wet Willie

Mobile, Alabama. One of the best exponents of the Southern Rock sound of the 1970's with hits including "Keep On Smilin," "Street Corner Serenade," and "Weekend."



Lil Greenwood

Prichard, Alabama. Band leader Duke Ellington discovered her in 1958 and worked with him until his death in 1974. Ellington introduced her to some of the era's biggest stars, including Sarah Vaughan, Eartha Kitt, Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holliday.



Beth Nielsen-Chapman

is a songwriter/performer. Chapman's 1997 release "Sand and Water" was covered by Elton John as an expression of his hurt over the loss of Princess Diana. The 1998 Chapman song "This Kiss", recorded by Faith Hill, held the #1 position on the Country Charts for many weeks. The song received a 1999 Grammy Nomination for Best Country Song.



James Reese Europe

This man forever changed the face of popular music when on 1905 he helped stage the first public jazz concert in the United States as a member of Ernest Hogan's Memphis Students.



Shelby Lynne

Popular Singer and Songwriter, Mobile.



Allison Moorer

Singer. Allison most recently wrote the song "A soft place to fall" featured song in Robert Redford's "The Horse Whisperer."



Charles Smith

Mobile, Alabama based Charles Smith is one of the nation's premier African American potters. Wheel thrown, handcrafted raku, stoneware and porcelain design pottery by Charles Smith has been featured in American Craft and Ceramics Monthly.



Carolyn Haines

Author of romance novels.



Melinda Haynes

Author of "Mother of the Pearl" featured in Oprah Winfrey's Book Club.



Winston Groom

Groom is the author of 'Forrest Gump' and forty-two other books or novels. Groom and his family are residents of the Eastern Shore area.



Augusta Evans Wilson

most famous author of her time from Mobile. Wrote such greats as "Beulah", "Macaria," and "St. Elmo."



Nall Hollis

Nall, known only by his first name professionally, is an internationally recognized artist originally from Troy, Alabama, who now lives and works mostly in Fairhope, Huntsville and France. Over eight books have been written about or by him. In 1996, the book "NALL Technique and Symbol" written by Alain Renner, director of Sotheby's Monte-Carlo and Paris, was published.



Eugene Walter

Eugene Walter, born in Mobile, Eugene Walter was a unique, happy-go-lucky life as a writer, actor, translator, cryptographer, costume designer, chef, expatriate, and Southerner. Known in the literary world his works are available on-line or in bookstores. (<http://www.alabamastuff.com/walters.html>)



William Campbell

(pen name William March) is best known for his novels and short stories he had only one best-selling book, *The Bad Seed*.



Fannie Flagg

author of "Fried Green Tomatoes" is a resident of Fairhope, Alabama. Fannie Flagg's writing career began behind the scenes of television's *Candid Camera* and progressed to out-in-front as performer-writer.



Truman Capote

American novelist, short story writer, and playwright. Capote gained international fame with his "nonfiction novel" *IN COLD BLOOD* (1966), an account of a real life crime in which an entire family was murdered by two sociopaths. The Louisiana-Mississippi-Alabama area provided the setting for much of Capote's fiction. Truman Capote was born in New Orleans as the son of a salesman and a 16-year-old beauty queen. The unhappy marriage gradually disintegrated, and Capote's parents divorced when he was four. The young Truman was brought up in Monroeville, Alabama, about an hour from Mobile. He lived some years with relatives, one of whom became the model for the loving, elderly spinster in several Capote's novels, stories, and plays.



Harper Lee

Nelle Harper Lee was born on April 28, 1926 in Monroeville, Alabama, about an hour from Mobile. Harper Lee attended Huntingdon College 1944-45, studied law at University of Alabama 1945-49, and studied one year at Oxford University. In the 1950s she worked as a reservation clerk with Eastern Air Lines and BOAC in New York City. In order to concentrate on writing Harper Lee gave up her position with the airline and moved into a cold-water apartment with makeshift furniture. In 1960 *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published, her only published book.



W.E.B. Griffin

A resident of Fairhope, AL., he began as a writer of fiction for young adults and is the author of more than 100 books. His books have frequently appeared on the best seller lists of *The New York Times* and *Publisher's Weekly*.

NOTABLE PEOPLE



Admiral Jeremiah Andrew Denton, Jr.

Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy Retired, United States Senator from Alabama 1981-1987. Former Vietnam POW for nearly 8 years. Author of the memorable book about his POW experience, *When Hell Was in Session*.



Octavia Levert

Not a native but synonymous with Mobile.



William C. Gorgas

Surgeon General, January 16, 1914 - October 3, 1918. Conquer of yellow fever facilitated building of the Panama Canal.

<http://history.amedd.army.mil/tsgs/Gorgas.htm>



Yolande Betbeze

In 1950, a stunning 21 year old from Mobile, Alabama won the title of Miss America 1951. The exotic Yolande Betbeze, who stood 5-5, with brown hair and suntan complexion, was the choice of the judges.

<http://www.geocities.com/televisioncity/9699/reluctant.html>



George Bigelow Rogers

A famed architect of the South, namely the Bellingrath home.



Dr. Jerome Cochran

Founder of the Alabama State Department of Health and the Medical Association of the State of Alabama.



Richard Tyson

Richard Tyson is an actor and native Mobilian who was the star of the 1980's TV series "Hard Ball." Richard has appeared in the following movies: Kindergarten Cop (1990) with Arnold Schwarzenegger, Babe (1992) with John Goodman, There's Something About Mary with Ben Stiller (1998), Kingpin with Nicholas Cage (1996), Lethal Force (2002), Black Hawk Down (2001), Firetrap (2001), and Battlefield Earth with John Travolta (2000). He can still be seen in major motion pictures and has many notable TV guest appearances.



Jason Guy

Jason Guy, a contestant from the CBS reality show "Big Brother 3," has been called one of the greatest Christian characters to ever hit primetime. The 25 year old video-grapher from Mobile, Alabama, Jason Guy, was chosen as one of the twelve contestants from among 6,000 applicants. He entered the Big Brother house this summer to make some friends and have a shot at the \$500,000 grand prize. Jason finished the show in third place after 79 days in the sequestered house where his every move was caught on camera and watched by nearly 15 million people three nights a week. He survived until only three houseguests remained, but was finally evicted only because he was perceived as the greatest threat to win the money.

SPORTS



Hank Aaron

Born Feb. 5, 1934 in Mobile, Alabama Hank led National Leagues in home run's and RBI 4 times each and batting twice with Milwaukee and Atlanta Braves; MVP in 1957; played in 24 All-Star Games, all-time leader in HRs (755), RBI (2,297), total bases (6,856), 3rd in hits (3,771); won 3 Gold Gloves; executive with Braves. Major roadways and a stadium in Mobile have been named after him.



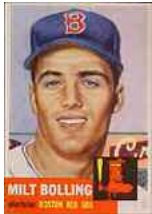
Satchel Paige

MLB- Cleveland Browns
Starred in the Negro Leagues.
<http://www.cmgww.com/baseball/paige/>



Amos Otis

MLB
<http://www.baseball-reference.com/o/otisam01.shtml>



Milt & Frank Bolling

A product of sandlot baseball in his hometown of Mobile, Alabama, Milt was born on August 9, 1930. His younger brother, Frank, born on November 16, 1931, played twelve seasons in the majors. Frank became the second baseman for the Tigers in 1954, moved to the Milwaukee Braves in a 1960 trade, and ended his career in Atlanta after the 1966 season.



Ozzie Smith

MLB- St. Louis Cardinals

Billie Williams (not pictured)

"Chicago Cubs known as "Sweet Swingin' Billy"



Willie McCovey

MLB player SF Giants



Ken Stabler

Oakland Raiders NFL



Richard Todd

As a teenager in Mobile, Ala., Richard Todd looked up to Joe Namath, whose path he followed first as a star quarterback at Alabama, then as the No. 1 draft pick of the New York Jets in 1976.



Danny Sheridan

America's leading sports analyst and handicapper and USA TODAY's resident sports analyst both domestically and internationally. Danny has been involved with sports and the sports promotion business for more than 25 years. I have published college and pro football magazines, written about sports in a variety of national publications, and have been the host of a number of sports TV and radio shows. I am a lifelong resident of Mobile, Alabama, and a graduate of the University Of Alabama School Of Business.



Mike Gottfried

ESPN college football analyst Mike Gottfried spent 12 successful seasons as a college football coach, is now one of television's most respected game analysts. Since joining ESPN in 1990, he's served as a college football analyst on ESPN's acclaimed Saturday Primetime telecasts with play-by-play partner Ron Franklin. Gottfried began his coaching career in 1966 as head coach at Roseville (Ohio) High School. His 12 years of college head coaching experience included stops at Murray State (1978-80), Cincinnati (1981-82), Kansas (1983-85) and Pittsburgh (1986-89). During his four years at Pitt, Gottfried compiled a record of 26-17-2, which included two wins each over Notre Dame, Penn State and West Virginia. His total coaching record as a college head football coach was 77-54-6.



Ivan Maisel

Ivan Maisel is a senior writer for college football at ESPN.com. Prior to joining ESPN Maisel was the senior writer for Sports Illustrated and CNNSI.com. Maisel covers college football for ESPN.com and contribute to ESPN's Sports Center, ESPNEWS, ESPN Radio and ESPN The Magazine. Maisel has also covered college sports for Newsday, served as a national college writer for the Dallas Morning News, and as a columnist for The Sporting News.



Vince Dooley

Georgia's winningest football coach has said that he has been "totally fulfilled" in his 35 years at the school -- a quarter-century as head football coach and a decade as athletic director. A Mobile, Ala. native and former Auburn University quarterback, Dooley came to UGA as head football coach in December 1963 after being hired by Joel Eaves, the university's first athletic director.



Mark Gottfried

Mark a former Mobilian is the son of Joe Gottfried the Athletic Director of the University of South Alabama and the head men's basketball coach of the University of Alabama. Mark Gottfried is the only person to have Alabama's last two SEC championship rings. First as a starting senior in 1987 and second as the Tide's head coach in 2002.



Antonio Lang

NBA star

HISTORICAL FIGURES



Alexis Herman

This outspoken U.S. Secretary of Labor was born in Mobile, AL in 1948. Ms Herman was sworn into her seat on May 9, 1997 as the 23rd Secretary of Labor; Alexis M. Herman was the first African-American to ever be nominated for the position and the fourth woman to be appointed in 84 years. Her father, Alex Herman, was the first king of the Mobile Area Mardi Gras Association.



Malcom P. McLean

Acting on an idea that he originally had in 1937, Malcom P. McLean purchased Mobile's Waterman Steamship Company and its subsidiary, Pan Atlantic, in 1955 and launched the containerized cargo industry. Today, 90 percent of all cargo is shipped via container, the practice of which was conceived and first implemented by McLean. McLean, known as the "Father of Containerization," died in 2001, at the age of 87.



Pierre le Moyne d'Iberville

In 1702, French explorers d'Iberville, Sauvole, and Bienville founded a settlement along the Mobile River, which was Fort Louis de la Louisiana, the new capital of the Louisiana Territory.



Raphael Semmes

When Alabama seceded, Semmes resigned from the US Navy, joined its Confederate counterpart, and became its most famous naval hero as captain of the CSS ALABAMA.



Major Robert Farmar

British army officer who was in charge of Mobile throughout most of the British rule. Farmar changed the name of the French occupied Fort Conde to Fort Charlotte in honor of the young queen of George III.



Major Andrew Damrell

Major Damrell was the head of the US Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, directed the city's first major dredging operation since before the war.



John LeFlore

John LeFlore's career as a community leader and civil rights activist spanned fifty years, 1925-75. He was the most significant figure in the struggle for black equality in Mobile, throughout the southern part of Alabama and Mississippi, and along the Florida Gulf Coast. The John L. LeFlore papers tell important stories about the civil rights movement in the urban South, document the development and early work of the NAACP in Mobile, and provide insight into his life and aspirations. To learn more about Mr. LeFlore visit the Museum of Mobile www.museumofmobile.com



A.N. Johnson

Born in 1865 in Marion, Alabama Johnson became the first editor of the Mobile Weekly Press in 1894. Johnson was a tireless worker who founded a funeral home in 1896. He was active in Alabama politics and the Republican Party and was selected a Delegate-At-Large in 1904 at the Republican Convention.