



Photo: The Internet Movie Database ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com))

# Florence Henderson

*Dale, Spencer County*

February 14, 1934 – November 24, 2016

Actress Florence Henderson was born on February 14, 1934, in Dale, Indiana. Her mother was a homemaker and her father was a tobacco sharecropper. She was the youngest of 10 children and learned to sing at age two. By the time she was eight she was singing in public, performing in local grocery stores, and at 16, she was earning money singing for the Kiwanis, the Elks, and the American Legion.

Henderson started her career in theater, appearing on Broadway and also starred in the national tour of Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* She moved over to TV, guest starring on *I Spy* and on various variety shows. She became *The Tonight Show's* first female guest host in 1962 in the period after Jack Paar left as the show's host, and before Johnny Carson began. That same year, she became "The Today Girl," a young woman on NBC's *The Today Show* who covered the weather and light news. She landed the role of Carol Brady on *The Brady Bunch* in 1969, which would become the role she is most remembered for. She played Carol Brady for five years. When the show met the minimum number of episodes required for syndication, it was cancelled, despite its popularity, and is still running in syndication today. She remained busy until her death, hosting shows, doing guest roles, or popping up frequently in live shows and public appearances.

Henderson was a fixture at the *Indianapolis 500*, singing before the race on twenty-three occasions. In May 2016, she served as the grand marshal for the 100th Anniversary of the Running of the "Greatest Spectacle in Racing."

Florence Henderson died of heart failure in Los Angeles on November 24, 2016 at the age of 82.

- For more information about Florence Henderson, go to: <http://www.biography.com/people/florence-henderson-9542153>.
- For more information about *Writing Her Story*, go to: <http://www.in.gov/icw/2440.htm>.

*Additional and more detailed references available at the end of Women's History Month*

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