

No Regrets

MaLaine (in 2015, and right, ca. 1960) isn't the second-guessing type. "I don't personally think that way. But I turned down *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* because I'd never heard of Martin Scorsese. Boy, that was a mistake."



*Shirley
MacLaine*

**WHAT
I KNOW
NOW**

AFTER 65 YEARS IN SHOWBIZ (PLUS HER PAST LIVES), THE LEGEND HAS LEARNED PLENTY ABOUT HAPPINESS, HONESTY AND DEMANDING RESPECT **By NIGEL SMITH**



to do next year. I think [some costars] are surprised I'm still walking upright. But I think it keeps me bright. . . . I learn so much about what I don't really know every time I'm on a movie. It's like a mini-civilization. You've got everything on a set: your artists, your blue-collar workers, your white-collar workers, the financier, the people who clean. I love the family it becomes. But there are not that many parts, so there's plenty of time in between [jobs]."

Define your relationships your way.

MacLaine had an open marriage with Parker. They were wed from 1954 until 1982, but she

had plenty of affairs with famous men, from Robert Mitchum and Yves Montand to former Canadian prime minister Pierre Trudeau. She says she wouldn't get married again—and those who do should think hard about how they define it. "I think we can examine openness and what we're committed to. How much do we consider the other individual property? In a marriage, so much of it is based on money. If you're going to wed in the name of saving money, how are you going to conduct your attitudes about jealousy, possession, monogamy and sexual expression?"

Shirley MacLaine wants people to know that despite what some might assume, she's not as cantankerous as her hilariously short-tempered character Ouiser Boudreaux in Steel Magnolias. "I do love being alone," she says. "And no, I usually don't want to go to your party. But if I do go, I'm always the last to leave." Born in Richmond, Va., to a professor father and drama teacher mother, the older sister of actor Warren Beatty trained as a ballerina as a child but was discovered by a film producer soon after she started a Broadway career. In 1955 she made her film debut in Alfred Hitchcock's The Trouble with Harry and won the Golden Globe for best newcomer. Now the 85-year-old actress has more than 50 films to her name; six Oscar nominations; one win for her role in 1983's Terms of Endearment; a Kennedy Center Honor; and a daughter, Sachi, 62, from her 28-year marriage to producer Steve Parker. She also has written 10 bestselling books, including the 2016 memoir Above the Line, in which she detailed her firm belief in reincarnation. MacLaine still works steadily, but cherishes her downtime at her ranch in Abiquiu, N.M. "The secret I've found is not to keep busy," she says. "Give it up and learn to amalgamate with nature. I have all the animals around me. It's everything I need to be happy." The star, whose classic Steel Magnolias turns 30 this year, shared more lessons that she's learned over the course of her legendary life and career.

Golden Moment

She and Jack Nicholson both won Oscars in 1984 for *Terms of Endearment*. "He's one of the great players on life's stage," she says. "I loved working with him. So spontaneous, so daring."



If you find what you love, never stop.

"I don't want to quit acting—I really don't," says MacLaine. "Even at my age, I have four pictures



Brotherly Love
While accepting AFI's Life Achievement Award in 2012, MacLaine thanked her younger brother Warren Beatty (here, in 1966) as "the person I've loved the longest on this planet, and always will."



Family Days

"No one understood it, we did," MacLaine previously told *People* of her open marriage with Steve Parker (above in 1959 with daughter Sachi, who was born in 1956) before the pair split in 1982.



Be true to yourself—and be candid with others.

"I'm comfortable in my skin," says MacLaine. "And I always want to help other people know who they are. I've had some journalists tell me that my candor helped them be more self-knowing. I don't know how to lie. I don't think I like not being good at it, so I don't do it." That said, she won't talk about everything, including her daughter Sachi, with whom she has a complicated relationship. "There are things in my life that I don't discuss at all, and that's that. But I think open communica-

tion without agendas is what we need more of in the world."

Believe in what you want to believe in.

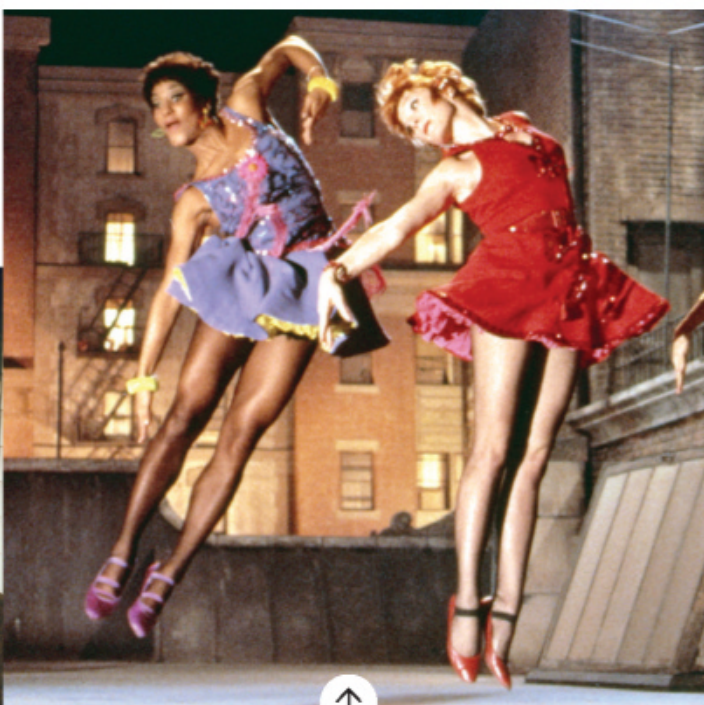
"I'm studying what it means to be human," says MacLaine, who believes in aliens and wrote in her book *Above the Line* about her past life in Atlantis 2 million years ago. "That's why I'm so interested in UFOs and other civilizations. They're there! So what can we learn from them? Sometimes I've [been mocked], especially my discussions about UFOs and reincarnation. But, okay, let's discuss it. The more we discuss it, the less grounds for humiliation it serves. That's never bothered me much any-

Six Decades of Stardom



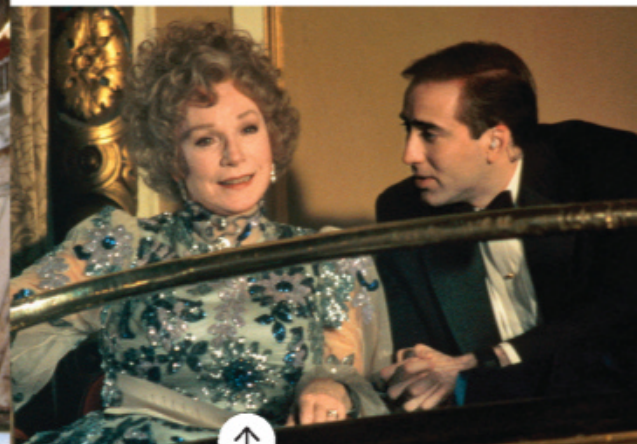
The Trouble with Harry

"I found him very sarcastically saucy," MacLaine says of Alfred Hitchcock (left), who directed her and John Forsythe in her 1955 big-screen debut.



Sweet Charity

MacLaine put her ballet training to use in 1969's *Sweet Charity*, directed by choreographer Bob Fosse. "I never experienced the things people say about him—how difficult he was," she says.



Guarding Tess

Her role as a former First Lady who clashes with her bodyguard (Nicolas Cage) in the 1994 comedy earned her a Golden Globe nomination for Best Actress.

TOP, FROM LEFT: BETTMAN ARCHIVE(2); GLOBE PHOTOS/ZUMA PRESS



Steel Magnolias Turns 30!

MacLaine says that she and her all-star castmates (from left, Dolly Parton, Sally Field, Olympia Dukakis, Julia Roberts and Daryl Hannah in New York City, 1989) still keep in touch. “We check in with each other,” she says. “Not all the time, but we know what we’re doing.” The film scored Roberts her first Oscar nomination. “She was amazing,” says MacLaine, adding she knew Roberts was headed for success. “Her rise to fame was so immediate. She did *Pretty Woman* right after this.”

way... I just love the study of it. I’m just ultra-curious about everything.”

Older women deserve respect.

“I look back at the wonderful parts I’ve had the honor to play, and I’m thinking about the future, and I want to be a spokesperson for older women—probably because I’m one,” she says. “I don’t think the characters have been expressive enough [on-screen], nor have they been respected enough. One of the reasons I don’t want to retire and why I want to stay healthy is so as an 85-year old, I can bring it to the screen.”

‘Shakespeare was right. Life itself is theater, and we’re all just actors on its stage’



These Old Broads

Carrie Fisher wrote the 2001 TV movie (which also starred Fisher’s mother, Debbie Reynolds, right, and Joan Collins) about feuding celebs forced to do a reunion show.

Try hard not to be grouchy.

In *Steel Magnolias*, Ouiser Boudreaux was one of the greatest grumps ever to hit the big screen. “I think I was rehearsing for my old age,” she says of the role in the 1989 dramedy. “And every time I’m unpleasant to someone, I remember and think, ‘Oh wait a minute, this is not a set. This is real life. And I will try to improve myself.’ But I loved experimenting with that straight, direct, judgmentalness that Ouiser had. I think it was so many people’s favorite part because they were going through what she was—I think if they were cantankerous, they felt liberated to be that way, since it was so funny onscreen.”

Being alone is a wonderful thing.

“I’m on my ranch in the middle of nowhere in New Mexico, and I love it,” says MacLaine. “I have someone who comes in a couple of times a week, but otherwise I’m totally alone. I sometimes go to Santa Fe, which is one of the artistic and restaurant and new age capitals of the country. I have what I consider just a perfect life... I eat what I want, I sleep when I want. Not that much bothers me. I think attitudes are a choice. Anger is a choice, peace is a choice, sarcasm—which is what I’m good at—is a choice.”

Save your best secret for last.

Asked what fans would be surprised to learn about her, MacLaine teases that she’s holding onto one final bombshell. “I will talk about that just before I die,” she says. “And they will be shocked. But I’ve got another 15 years to go here!” ●



Downton Abbey

MacLaine (in 2012) “got a kick” out of sparring with costar Maggie Smith on the show. “She has to obey me,” she jokes. “I’m older than her.”