

THE

Nick Zegarac's

Hollywood

ART

Audrey Hepburn

Still the fairest in the land

Most 'Lovely' of All

Why Audrey Hepburn is 'our fair lady'

by Nick Zegorac

"The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside; somewhere where they can be quiet alone with the heavens, nature and God. As long as this exists, and certainly it always will, I know there will always be comfort for every sorrow. And I firmly believe nature brings softness in all troubles."

– Audrey Hepburn

To imagine Audrey Hepburn is to conjure to mind the image of a most beautiful flower in the perennial serenity of some eternal garden. Her willowy body is like an elegant branch, perched with the most idyllic blossom of a human visage ever known to man. Although there is far more to Audrey than her ethereal good looks, this botanical reference serves to illustrate her resiliency against the storms of personal tragedy and professional success. Neither ever went to her head.

It seems fitting then, that Audrey Hepburn's foray into the world of entertainment was as an aspiring ballerina. For, although she never danced professionally in any of her films she seems to pirouette about our collective memory as something of the flavor and coloring of a lovely Shakespearean sprite. Her commitment to the resistance in Holland during World War II was a precursor for later humanitarianism. Arguably, it is Audrey's tireless efforts as UNICEF's Goodwill Ambassador that remain her most important and enduring legacy; an enigmatic and compassionate envoy of world benevolence.

For a brief time Audrey's film career was everything. Yet, in totem she was only a veteran of 27 features before officially retiring from the screen. A chance meeting with fashion designer, Hubert Givenchy engendered a life-long alliance of enchanted sophistication. Audrey's earlier collaboration with French author Colette cemented her public reputation as everyone's favorite gamine in Broadway's *Gigi*; a moniker well suited.

For Audrey was atypically authentic and genuine in a profession built almost exclusively on superficiality and artifice. Therein lays the forte of Audrey's radiance; in an innate ability to project beyond mere vulnerability and allure, though both qualities were amply provided for in her brief cannon of stage and screen appearances. Each







(Previous pages, Title page: posing in all her Ascot finery for fashion designer and amateur photographer, Cecil Beaton on the set of *My Fair Lady* 1964. Beaton frequently pulled Audrey aside between takes to photograph her which thoroughly annoyed director George Cukor.

First page, top: Audrey poses; an as yet undiscovered model in Europe. First page, bottom: a rare color still of Audrey on the set of *Sabrina* (1954). The film cast Audrey as the would-be lover of rich playboy, David Larabee (William Holden) but who wins the heart of his more serious brother, Linus (Humphrey Bogart) instead. Though Holden and Hepburn began a short lived love affair while working on this project, Bogart and Hepburn did not get along at all.

Second page: in a dramatic pose wearing clothes designed by Givenchy for *Breakfast At Tiffany's* (1961). The outfit is never seen in the finished film.

This page, top left: striking a rather uncharacteristically carefree pose as Joanna Wallace in Stanley Donen's *Two For The Road* 1967 – a non-linear critique of marriage in steep decline. The film costars Albert Finney whom Audrey had an affair with while shooting on location in France.

Top right: precocious in another stunning Hubert Givenchy design as Nicole in *How To Steel a Million* (1967); the daughter of a man who creates artistic forgeries that he sells to museums. Right: with Peter O'Toole from the same film. Bottom: with Rex Harrison on the set of *Mrs. Higgin's London apartment* from *My Fair Lady*.)



has yielded, by measure, to the outreach of her boundless love for humanity.

"Remember," Audrey once said, "...if you ever need a helping hand, it's at the end of your arm. As you get older, remember that you have another. The first is to help yourself. The second is to help others. People, even more than things, have to be restored, revived, reclaimed and redeemed. Never throw out anyone."

When Audrey Hepburn departed this life on June 20th, 1993 only the abstraction of her physical commitment in both her time and energies, that had generated a fervent desire to make this world a better place while she lived, was taken from us. But what Audrey has left behind is an authenticity for people and an aide memoire - that such impeccability for the human spirit is not only within our grasp, but utterly vital to our survival on this planet.

In reverence, Tiffany & Co. outlets around the world declared a day of mourning on June 20th by closing their doors and hanging this epitaph in their windows: ***"To***



Audrey Hepburn – our Huckleberry friend.” She will always be appreciated and adored as that most munificent of human beings; a very profound quality that so very few words seem adequately to suffice.

AUDREY – A HISTORY

“I was born with an enormous need for affection, and a terrible need to give it.”
- Audrey Hepburn

Although her baptismal certificate reads Hedda Van Emstra Hepburn Ruston, Audrey Hepburn was born Audrey Kathleen Ruston in Brussels, Belgium on May 4, 1929. Her mother was a divorcee with two sons and a member of the Dutch aristocracy who married for a second time, beneath her station, to Joseph Hepburn Ruston. Ruston fancied himself a banker, but his penchant for living the good life leant itself more to the spurious conniving of a wheeler/dealer. Life in the Ruston home was hardly idyllic, with the Baroness and Joseph frequently feuding over money concerns.

Hence, Audrey’s youth was spent mostly in the care of nannies and in the company of her two older half brothers, Ian and Alexander. By all accounts, Audrey was a shy, introverted tomboy – a mold her mother was determined to break by sending her daughter away to a boarding school in England when she was only five years old.

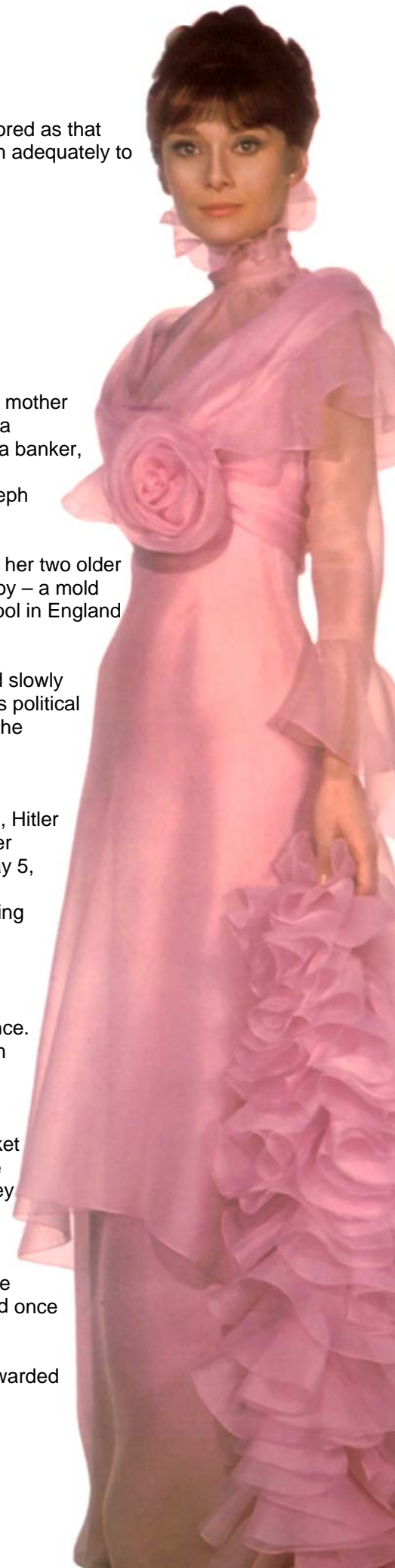
In 1934, Joseph Ruston had embraced the pro-German propaganda machine that had slowly begun to grip the European landscape. Although the Baroness tolerated her husband’s political views she never took to them herself and in 1938, with WWII looming on the horizon, the Baroness and Ruston divorced.

By her own account, Audrey described her exile to school as ‘shock therapy’, but of a positive nature, for it encouraged the young girl to indulge in her love of ballet. In 1939, Hitler invaded Poland and the Baroness, fearful of their long distance separation, recalled her daughter to Arnum, Belgium where the family resided. It was a fateful decision. On May 5, 1940 the Nazis seized Arnum. Ian was sent to an internment forced labor camp and Alexander went into hiding. Audrey’s mother assumed the general care of her upbringing and tutelage.

Recognizing her daughter’s gift for dance, the Baroness sent Audrey to the Arnum Conservatory. In the evenings, Audrey gave what were then known as ‘blackout performances’ – recitals in someone’s basement to raise monies for the Allied resistance. Occasionally, Audrey also served as a courier, delivering secret messages to and from various locations about town under the watchful eye of the Nazis. But the greatest hardships of the war were yet to follow.

On September 17, 1944 the Allies made Arnum the central initiative of Operation Market Garden – the single greatest blunder of the conflict. In the hailstorm of land and air fire power that followed the city of Arnum was mercilessly leveled to the ground and Audrey and her family forced to flee for their lives. Living off of tulip bulbs and cooked grass, Audrey and her mother barely kept body and soul together during the long months of starvation. On May 5, 1945 Germany surrendered and aid from UNRA (a precursor to UNICEF) began to pour into Arnum. Audrey was reunited with her half brothers, but the family quickly realized that there was no future for them in the decimated ruins that had once been their home.

In 1948, Audrey and her mother immigrated to London, England where Audrey was awarded





(Top left: aspiring ballerina, preening in this early publicity still most likely taken while Audrey was studying dance at the Arnum Conservatory. Middle left: as a teenager. Looking at this photo, and in retrospect, Audrey's visage never seems to have changed. Certainly, her positive outlook on life remained the same.

Middle right: as a favorite chorine at the famed Ciro's nightclub in London. Audrey used the money from this gig to help sustain her and her mother after the war. Top right: affectionately clutching Sean Ferrer as she heads to board a plane for New York. Audrey always valued her family much more than she did her career.

Right: with first husband Mel Ferrer and their pet dog on the grounds just beyond their home in Switzerland. Below: mugging for Mel on a golf course in Switzerland.)



a ballet scholarship. But at the age of 19, and at a height of 5 ft. 7 inches, Audrey was devastated to learn that she was both too tall and too old to pursue ballet as a career. She regrouped quickly, dropping all of her birth names except Audrey Hepburn, and quickly procured several lucrative dance jobs in the chorus of London's West End theater shows. She also became a favorite at Ciro's; a fashionable nightclub frequented by magazine photographers and movie personnel.

To say that Audrey's aspirations for a film career were well thought out would be an overstatement. ***"I never thought I'd land in pictures with a face like mine,"*** Audrey would later admit, ***"I probably hold the distinction of being one movie star who, by all laws of logic, should never have made it. At each stage of my career I lacked the experience. I was asked to act when I couldn't act. I was asked to sing...when I couldn't...and dance with Fred Astaire when I couldn't dance...and do all kinds of things I wasn't prepared for. Then I tried like mad to cope with it."***

In fact, Audrey always considered her film 'discovery' a happy accident that began with brief appearances in **The Secret People** and **The Lavender Hill Mob**. In 1951, Audrey was given a sizeable role in **Monte Carlo Baby** – a forgettable romantic comedy that nevertheless caught the eye of French author Collette who recommended Audrey as the lead for the Broadway debut of **Gigi**.





(Top left: as Broadway's amiable gamin in training to be a courtesan in *Gigi* (1951). Middle: with Gregory Peck in the bittersweet romantic comedy, *Roman Holiday* (1951). Top right: the arrival of Audrey on the big screen in *Roman Holiday* heralding the arrival of any great star in Hollywood. In the film, Audrey is presented as a reluctant princess who desires nothing more than some semblance of living a normal life removed from all her royal duties. To this end, the Princess steals into the night and indulges in the city's glamorous indulgences. Eventually, she winds up sleeping off a drunken hangover inside the apartment of newspaper hound, Joe Bradley (Peck).

Bradley's plan is to exploit the Princess's 'holiday' and splash the pictures along with his story all over the tabloids. Unfortunately for Bradley, his heart gets carried away first. Right: asked in a crowded room of reporters, of which Bradley is but one, at the end of the film to quantify which city that has meant the most to her on her European tour the Princess attempts a stock answer, before locking eyes affectionately with Bradley – whom she loves – for the last time. "Rome, by all means," the Princess instead tells the reporters, "I shall treasure this city for as long as I live."

Bottom: having bobbed her hair at a local Italian barber shop, the Princess encourages Joe to take a 'holiday' with her, beginning with an ice cream cone on the Spanish Steps.)



Boarding the Queen Mary for New York, Audrey appeared at the Fulton Theater on Oct. 3, 1951 in *Gigi*. The reviews were unanimous and ecstatic. Hollywood called, with a personal invitation from director William Wyler to audition for the role of a princess in *Roman Holiday*. Audrey won the role opposite Gregory Peck and shortly thereafter, also won her costar's heart. Their platonic mutual affection blossomed on set and Peck went to Wyler to insist that Audrey get star billing.

The film was both an artistic and commercial smash and Paramount quickly capitalized on the success of their 'new find' by casting Audrey in Billy Wilder's lush romantic/comedy *Sabrina* (1954). Audrey played a reclusive chauffeur's daughter harboring a deep dark crush on the son of a wealthy house and, once again, exhibited the sort of elusive childlike innocence and womanly charm that had made her so appealing to audiences.

Just prior to *Sabrina's* shoot, Audrey was first introduced to couturier Hubert Givenchy. So the story goes, Givenchy had received a call from Paramount informing him that a "Miss Hepburn" was coming to view his collection. As Audrey had only just debuted in *Roman Holiday* and was, as yet, not well known, Givenchy thought that the studio was sending over Katherine Hepburn. Hence, when Audrey arrived, Givenchy did not





(Top left: all smiles for a publicity photo for Billy Wilder's *Sabrina* (1954); from left, Humphrey Bogart, Audrey and William Holden. Top right: the Paramount Theater marquee decked out with likenesses of Bogart and Audrey for the premiere of *Sabrina*.)

Left: sometimes the behind the scenes stills tell more about the back story of a film than the staged photographs. Here, the mutual admiration shared between costars Gregory Peck and Audrey while filming *Roman Holiday* (1951) is obvious, even during a casual game of cards.

Below: compare this photo of Bogart and Audrey on the set of *Sabrina*. Bogart was in the final stages of his life, besought by chronic pain and a chain smoking habit that was oppressive. Nevertheless, he and Audrey did not get on – their backstage mutual animosity in direct contrast to the film's central love affair that shifts from Audrey and Bill Holden to Audrey and Bogart's characters.)

recognize her as his potential client and furthermore, suggested that she simply go to the racks to make her selections. Eventually, Audrey informed Givenchy of her purpose. It was the beginning of one of the most lucrative and memorable film/fashion collaborations in screen history.

The shooting of *Sabrina* was also notable for Audrey's first great romance with a costar; 34 year old William Holden. Sparks flew, but their passion quickly cooled when Holden informed Audrey that he could not have children. Audrey wanted a family more than she desired a career and so the affair ended amicably. Audrey announced, much to everyone's surprise, that she was leaving Hollywood for Broadway to costar with Mel Ferrer in *Ondine* – a supernatural romantic melodrama. Though the play opened to mixed reviews, Audrey was quick to fall in love with Ferrer who was twelve years her senior and already twice divorced.



(Above: the publicity art for Sabrina capitalized on Audrey's gamin quality, a value that Audrey herself was increasingly becoming tired of playing down to. Right: with Anthony Perkins in Mel Ferrer's ill fated production of Green Mansions 1959. Bottom: breaking the mold with her startling honest performance in The Nun's Story 1959.)

Ferrer convinced Audrey that acting could be just as rewarding as dancing and, under his tutelage, Audrey grew to respect her craft. It was a lesson well timed, since Audrey was soon to learn that not only had she won the Tony for her performance in **Ondine**, but also that she had been awarded the Best Actress Academy Award for her performance in **Roman Holiday**. Accepting the Oscar with both grace and humility, Audrey admitted, *"It's too much. I want to say thank you to everybody whom these past months and years have helped, guided and given me so much. I'm truly, truly grateful and terribly happy."*

Audrey capped off her successes of 1954 by marrying Mel Ferrer in a quiet private service in France on September 25, with the solemn vow that she would never allow either celebrity or the demands of her career to negatively impact her marriage. *"Success,"* Audrey once said, *"...is like reaching an important birthday and finding you're exactly the same. There are certain shades of limelight that can wreck a girl's complexion."*

Shortly after marrying Ferrer, Audrey realized that she was pregnant. Unfortunately, she was unable to carry the child to term and the resulting miscarriage thrust her into a severe depression. To ease her emotional pain, Ferrer suggested that they both go back to work in **War and Peace** (1956) – a lavishly mounted, though ultimately leaden translation of Tolstoy's immortal novel. Much more successful on every level were Audrey's next two film projects; the first costarring Fred Astaire in the musical, **Funny Face** (1957) and the second, opposite Gary Cooper in Billy Wilder's sly romantic comedy, **Love In The Afternoon** (1957). But by now, Audrey had tired of playing fairytale gamins. She longed for personal fulfillment in her private life and to be taken as a serious actress in her professional career.

To this end, Audrey's next film was **The Nun's Story** (1959) – a movie of stark emotional intensity and without the benefit of lush settings and stunning costumes. Audrey's gripping performance earned her a third Oscar nomination as Best







(Top left: 'Bonjour Paris!' – concluding a production number atop the Eiffel Tower with Fred Astaire and Kay Thompson in *Funny Face* 1957. Top right: as the luminous call girl in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*'s 1960. Left: rehearsing with Stanley Donen on the left bank in Paris for *Funny Face*. Above: with costar Gary Cooper in an intimate still from Billy Wilder's *Love in the Afternoon* 1957 – a B&W movie.

Previous page: "Take my picture!" Audrey declares, mimicking the stance of 'winged victory for Fred Astaire's benefit in *Funny Face*.)



(Top left: "How kind of you to let me come." Eliza Doolittle arrives at Ascot under the watchful eyes of her mentor Prof. Henry Higgins (Rex Harrison) and Colonel Pickering (Wilfred Hyde-White) in *My Fair Lady* 1964. Top right: another glamorous Cecil Beaton portrait of Audrey wearing the final outfit from the same film.



Right: with Cary Grant in Stanley Donen's Hitchcockian thriller, *Charade* 1963. Grant plays Peter Joshua, an undercover FBI agent tracking the spurious goings on of a trio of thugs after Regina Lampert (Hepburn) after the body of her late husband is tossed off a fast moving tram.



Bottom: in between takes with costar Peter O'Toole in Paris for *How To Steal A Million* 1966. O'Toole is Simon Dermott – an insurance investigator who suspects that Audrey's father is a con artist. He, of course, is right complicating Simon's growing romantic interests in Nicole (Hepburn). The film is one of director William Wyler's last great cinematic works.)

Actress. Unfortunately, Audrey's next two films; **Green Mansions** (1959) and **The Unforgiven** (1960) were modest flops. It was at the tail end of this latter project that Audrey learned she was pregnant yet again. Taking no chances this time, she retired to the home she and Ferrer had purchased in Switzerland where she remained bed ridden until the birth of their son, Sean on January 17, 1960.

Returning to Hollywood, Audrey starred in the film that would forever become synonymous with her name; **Breakfast At Tiffany's**. Cast as the expensive call girl of Truman Capote's novel, Audrey's superb performance provided both a strong core and heart-breaking charm. It also afforded her the first opportunity to sing on screen – warbling a few bars of what would eventually become an iconic movie anthem; Henry Mancini's Moon River.

Pre-screening a rough cut of the film for Paramount executives, it was suggested that director Blake Edward excise the song from the final cut. "**Over my dead body,**" was Audrey's curt reply. Her celebrity already assured, the song was allowed to remain in the film. Moon River won the 1961 Best Original Song Oscar and audiences have been grateful for Mancini's lilting, semi-tragic lullaby ever since.



The early 1960s were Audrey's final blossoming as far as her film career was concerned. She appeared to haunting effect in the stark melodrama with lesbian undertones, **The Children's Hour** (1961); was appropriately full of devious intrigues in Stanley Donen's suave spy thriller, **Charade** (1963), and lighter than air in the romantic comedy **Paris When It Sizzles** (1964). But of all the films that Audrey made, none generated as much initial hype, or post production fallout as **My Fair Lady** (1964).



Jack Warner had passed over Broadway's Eliza Doolittle – Julie Andrews – to cast Audrey in the film with the fervent understanding that she would do all her own singing. Only after the ink had dried on Audrey's contract did Warner 'suggest' that ghost singer Marni Nixon would be dubbing all of the vocals. Audrey was furious. She had hired a singing coach and had pre-recorded virtually all of the key musical sequences for the film. Thanks to surviving archival records, today's film historian is able to compare Audrey's vocals to those dubbed in by Nixon. Though Audrey is unable to hit the high notes, her vocals reveal a genuineness of heart and emotion that would probably have sufficed.

Dubbing has always been an integral part of Hollywood, even since the beginning of movie musicals. However, the leaking of information about Nixon's dubs to the press undercut critic's expectations of Audrey's performance. As a result, Audrey was universally overlooked and not even nominated for an Oscar – one, that ironically went to Julie Andrews for her debut in Walt Disney's **Mary Poppins**

Despite this critical snub, Audrey's popularity with audiences remained unchanged. But by now, Audrey's marriage to Mel Ferrer was on the rocks. Another miscarriage in 1965 only further strained their bond, even as Audrey retreated to Paris to film **How To Steal A Million** (1966). Audrey followed up this performance with another superior turn in **Two For The Road** (1967); ironically, the story of a couple whose idyllic romance turns rancid with marriage. In a last ditch effort to patch together their own crumbling union, Ferrer suggested that he and Audrey collaborate on **Wait Until Dark** (1967) – a terrifying suspense thriller in which Audrey is a blind woman being hunted by a trio of drug smugglers. A year later, on November 20, 1968, Audrey divorced Mel Ferrer.

She shocked her contemporaries and even the closest of her friends by falling in love almost immediately with Italian psychiatrist Andrea Dotti whom she married in January 1969. Shortly thereafter, Audrey gave birth to her second son, Luca. But the marriage was already on very shaky ground, buffeted by frequent rumors that Dotti's roving eye had resulted in several extramarital affairs. In an attempt to be more the wife and mother than the actress, Audrey retreated from public life and her career for the next five years. Increasingly however, she and Dotti were leading separate lives.

After an eight year absence from films, Audrey was coaxed from retirement for **Robin and Marian** (1976); a light romance that cast her opposite Sean Connery. Audrey also was introduced to Dutch actor Robert Wolders who was the widower of American actress Merle Oberon. The two found that they had much in common and shortly thereafter moved in together. It was an enduring union that would bear itself out in blissful contentment for the rest of Audrey's days. When, after nine years together, television interviewer Barbara Walters asked Audrey why she and Wolders had never married, Audrey's coy reply was that they were married... **"just not officially"**.

(Top: in a costume test for **Wait Until Dark** 1967, Audrey's last great starring role. Middle: looking radiant in a still from Sidney Sheldon's **Bloodlines** 1979, a colossal box office dud. As the angel, HAP, mugging with Richard Dreyfuss in a cornfield for Steven Spielberg's **Always** 1989.)





(Top left: In repose in her garden in Switzerland. In later years much of Hepburn's time was spent on providing humanitarian relief and generating awareness for UNICEF's many philanthropic world causes. Top right: a portrait of Audrey taken at the start of 1992, roughly one year before her death.)

Audrey continued to act to lesser effect – first in 1979's **Bloodlines** and then in 1981's **They All Laughed** – a movie overshadowed by the brutal murder of one of its costars; Dorothy Stratten who was also the lover of its director, Peter Bogdanovich. The best of Audrey's later film roles was as HAP, the angel in Steven Spielberg's **Always** (1989); itself a remake of **A Guy Named Joe** in which Audrey eases a reluctant Richard Dreyfuss into accepting the fact that he is already dead.

Audrey's most genuine and ardent commitment during these waning years of her professional film success came from her involvement with UNICEF. ***"Taking care of children has nothing to do with politics,"*** Audrey once said, ***"I think, perhaps with time, instead of there being a politicization of humanitarian aid, there will be a humanization of politics."***

As UNICEF's Goodwill Ambassador, Audrey was integral in bringing home the message of human suffrage from around the world. Using her celebrity as a sounding board for the cause, Audrey was tireless. At the age of 63, she made her final pilgrimage to Somalia on behalf of UNICEF and was visibly shaken and disturbed by the moral, as well as physical starvation of its peoples. But midway through her campaign, Audrey was befallen by acute stomach pains.

Returning to Switzerland under the belief that she had contracted a virus from the unclean living conditions, Audrey underwent an emergency laparoscopy at which time it was discovered that she had abdominal cancer that had spread to her appendix. Her family was shocked to learn that Audrey was given three months to live. She spent those final days in the solace of family and friends. ***"We kept the good and left the sadness behind,"*** son Sean Ferrer admits.

On January 20, 1993, Audrey Hepburn died. She was laid to rest in a simple grave on the grounds of the home she and Robert Wolders shared. ***"There are few people in one's life that you never truly feel are gone,"*** director Blake Edwards admitted in an interview some years ago, ***"I have to remind myself that she isn't around."***

Indeed, since Audrey's death there doesn't seem to be a day that goes by that we are not reminded of her in some way. Whether through endless revivals of her film legacy on television and in theaters, or through the reconstitution of

her graceful image in commercial ads, magazine and newspaper tributes; Audrey Hepburn endures as few of her contemporaries have.

She retains a timeless and magical allure with audiences. She communicates that intangible quality of complete radiance on a level for mass appeal. The sun may have set on her time, but the light that was and remains her living legacy, the best of the human heart, mind and spirit, is perennially renewed in our collective admiration for her. Thus, Audrey Hepburn is ever more loved and beloved and for all the right reasons – because she was a very great lady.

In later years, Audrey's humanitarian legacy became linked to 'Time Tested Beauty Tips'; a poem written by Sam Levenson which she read with an internalized understanding of its deeper meanings.

***For beautiful eyes, look for the goodness in others.
For beautiful lips, speak only words of kindness.
For beautiful hair, let a child run his or her fingers through it once a day.
For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry.
And for poise, walk with the knowledge that you are never alone.***

