

STILL GOT HER GROOVE

BEST KNOWN FOR HER
STIRRING PORTRAYALS OF
TINA TURNER, ROSA PARKS,
CORETTA SCOTT KING AND
OTHER POWERFUL WOMEN,
ANGELA BASSETT IS
FOREVER AWESOME.

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“I’m blessed to be doing what I love, and able to earn a living doing it.”

Gratitude. It emanates from Angela Bassett, especially when she reflects on family and career. The Academy Award nominee, four-time Emmy nominee and Golden Globe winner sounds as joyful about an RV trip through the desert with husband, actor Courtney B. Vance, and their 12-year-old twins, Bronwyn Golden and Slater Josiah, as she does about a robust slate of upcoming television and film projects.

Bassett has little downtime between projects. This season, she returns as Police Sergeant Athena Grant in the second season of FOX’s *9-1-1*, a one-hour drama in which she is both star and executive producer; and gives voice to a cherry-red Plymouth Satellite named Shatter in *Bumblebee*, the new *Transformers* movie. Also on her lineup is the new Netflix Originals film *Otherhood*, which taps both her acting and executive producing skills.

Most of her characters are undeniably strong. Consider her power in films including *What’s Love Got to Do With It*, *Waiting to Exhale*, *How Stella Got Her Groove Back* and *Black Panther*; and in TV movies, such as *The Rosa Parks Story* and *Betty and Coretta*. Perhaps that strength reflects less on her acting skills than on her inner life. In the words of Queen Ramonda, her *Black Panther* persona, “Show them who you are.” Clearly, Bassett shows us she is captivating, passionate and downright authentic.

Who or what has served as your inspiration?

Golden B. Wall, my father’s sister. She and her husband Grover didn’t have kids of their own, so when my mother got pregnant with my sister, I stayed with them at their home in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Aunt Golden was such a great role model, a hard-working woman of faith. She was always striving to be better, to expand on her knowledge and experiences. I’m grateful for the time I spent with her.

Growing up, what kind of future did you envision for yourself?

At 15 years old, I realized I wanted to pursue a career in acting. My vision was of building a portfolio of quality work on stage and screen, so I focused on getting as much exposure to the craft as possible. While at Yale Drama School (we called it Yale Trauma School), we got a very well-rounded view of what it meant to be in this business, doing everything associated with putting together a stage production, from running lines to building sets. Between that and taking classes, I didn’t get much sleep, but I loved and breathed it. I was proud to grace the stage during commencement at Yale last May to receive an honorary doctorate degree. I’ve been blessed to accomplish so much, and I’m still creating, something I don’t take lightly.

What’s the best advice you’ve ever received?

A religious leader once told me, “If your outgoing exceeds your incoming, then your upkeep will be your downfall. Never live beyond your means.” Very simple, and also very true.

Tell us about your most memorable trip.

For our 20th anniversary, my husband, Courtney B. Vance, and I took our twins and a couple of friends on an RV road trip from Los Angeles to Sedona, Arizona. The kids are busy now with their own activities, and Courtney and I are often working in various parts of the world, so it was wonderful to have this time together to celebrate our family.

Where do you feel most at home?

As someone who really loves to travel, I feel at home wherever I am, as long as I have good friends and my family with me. My loved ones represent home for me.

What would people be surprised to learn about you?

I can spend hours on the dance floor! I love to dance. Turn on some good music and I'm hooked. [Editor's note: A video of the sexy diva busting a move at her 60th birthday party in September 2018 went viral.] Another surprise: I love to cook and eat. I'm very comfortable getting in the kitchen and making something special happen. It's very therapeutic.

How do you stay grounded?

I'm always reflective of the fact that I'm blessed to be doing what I love, and able to earn a living doing it. I come from humble beginnings, so I have a real appreciation for my family having choices in life and an abundance of resources. I don't take any of it for granted, and we make sure our children have the same understanding.

Which of your many film and television roles has had the biggest impact on you?

When I think about *What's Love Got to Do with It*, portraying Tina Turner really helped me define what I'm truly capable of, how strong I can be. There was so much required of me to bring that phenomenal woman to life on the screen. Nothing I've done since has been as demanding as that role, so I'm grateful to have had that experience early on in my career. I often categorize my life and career in terms of "Before *What's Love*" and "After *What's Love*." That's how much of an amazing impact that journey had on my life.

What would you like your legacy to be?

I want to be remembered for being a woman of faith, a loving mother who instilled positive values, principles and guidance throughout my children's lives, as well as an actress whose body of work gave people joy and filled their spirits.

What has motherhood taught you?

Motherhood has taught me I'm not perfect, and that's okay. Perfection isn't required for parents. Instead, I'm driven to work hard every day to be the best example I can be for my children. They, in turn, have taught me patience and given me the feeling of the deepest love you can have for another human being.



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ANGELA'S FAVORITES

Most treasured possession:
Hmmm...In terms of material possessions, I'd say my art collection.

Comfort mode go-tos:
Good food, a T-shirt and jeans, then settling in for binge-watching a great TV series.

Beauty items:
Eyeliner that's not too thick that it closes my eyes, and bottled water, because it's good for internal cleansing, which means glowing and hydrated skin.

Designer:
Christian Siriano, Tracy Reese, Victoria Beckham, rag & bone, Diane von Furstenberg, Max Azria, Tom Ford... I could go on and on.

Wheels:
Courtney just gave me a cranberry red Chevrolet Bolt to match his sky blue one. I love zipping around town in it, and since it's an electric car, not having to buy gas anymore.