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Helen Keller: The Rest of the Story

**Childhood**:

* Helen Keller was born in a small town called Tuscumbia, Alabama, on an estate called Ivy Green. Her birthday was June 27, 1880, and her parents were Kate Adams Keller and Colonel Arthur Keller.
* In February 1882, 19-month-old Helen became extremely ill and lost her ability to hear and see.
* Helen’s mother Kate wrote to the head of the Perkins School for the Blind to ask for a teacher for Helen.  They sent their star student, Anne Sullivan. The day she arrived—March 3, 1887—Helen's life changed.
* Anne had to figure out a way to make Helen understand words and their meaning. She began to teach Helen letters, by signing them into her palm. Then just one month later, everything clicked. Anne held Helen's hand under a pump while signing W-A-T-E-R into her palm. Helen's whole face lit up. The word came to life, in one moment. That day, April 5, 1887, she learned 30 words.

**Education**:

* When Helen was 13, Helen and Anne moved to New York City. There Helen attended the Wright-Humason school for the deaf. She was the only student who was deaf and blind. In class, Anne read everything and signed what she read into Helen's hand. Helen devoured information and became able to communicate with other adults and children. Helen and Anne are front left.
* Helen was accepted to Radcliffe College in 1899, and in 1904, she was the first deaf-blind person to receive a college degree. She graduated from Radcliffe College cum laude, which means with very high honors.
* While attending Radcliffe, Helen published her first book, The Story of My Life. She dedicate the book to Alexander Graham Bell.
* Mark Twain edited her first book

**World Leader**:

* Helen joined the Socialist Party in 1909.
* Helen, along with her assistant Polly, visited Nagasaki and Hiroshima to experience firsthand the aftermath of the atomic bombs.
* She visited 39 countries in her lifetime. Some of her travels include:
  + Canada in 1901
  + Ireland in 1930
  + Australia in 1948
  + South Africa in 1951
  + Jordan in 1952
  + Chile in 1953
  + Sweden in 1957
* Helen received several awards from other countries. To name a few, Helen received:
  + Brazil's Order of the Southern Cross
  + Japan's Sacred Treasure
  + The Philippines' Golden Heart
  + Lebanon's Gold Medal of Merit
  + St. Sava of Yugoslavia
  + The Chevalier Medal from the French Legion
* In 1916, Helen joined the Industrial Workers of the World.

**Life and Legacy**:

* Helen Keller won an Oscar for best feature-length documentary film of the year in 1955 for a documentary about her life, "Helen Keller in Her Story."
* Helen worked over 40 years for the American Foundation for the Blind. From 1924 until her death she was a member of the Foundation staff, serving as counselor on national and international relations. It was also in 1924 that Helen began her campaign to raise the "Helen Keller Endowment Fund" for the Foundation. Today, they house a large library and artifact room dedicated to her in their headquarters in New York City.
* Helen received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1964.
* In 1909, Helen joined the suffragist movement. In 1965, she was one of 20 elected to the Women's Hall of Fame at the New York World's Fair. She was also a pacifist and protested against the First World War and was one of the early members of the American Civil Liberties Union.

**Fun Facts**:

* Helen Keller wrote to eight Presidents of the United States, and received letters from all of them—from Theodore Roosevelt in 1903 to Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965.
* Helen Keller loved hot dogs!
* Helen was friends with many famous people, including Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, the writer Mark Twain, and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt.
* Helen Keller had an IQ of 160, which is within the "Genius or near Genius" range.
* Helen Keller is on the back of the Alabama state quarter.

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