Fostering Genius

Jodie Foster was born Alicia Christian Foster, but her siblings called her “Jodie” and it stuck as her stage name. Without training, she began acting at age six in the TV sitcom “Mayberry R.F.D.” Concurrently, she was becoming fluent in French, and to this day, Foster keeps those skills sharp by dubbing herself in French-language versions of her films. A born intellectual, Foster, who turns 60 on November 19, graduated from Yale, after her memorable work as a teenager in “Taxi.” Her most famous role, as an FBI agent in “The Silence of the Lambs,” may soon be prompting some déjà vu for the actress, producer, director and advocate. Next up, she’s slated to star in season 4 of HBO’s “True Detective.”

A Standup Guy

Jonathan Stuart Leibowitz grew up in New Jersey, and his first job was at a Woolworth’s store with his brother Lawrence. He changed his name to Jon Stewart when he started his standup career at The Bitter End in his birthplace of New York City. From MTV comedy shows and “The Daily Show,” to books and his current Apple TV series “The Problem with Jon Stewart,” Stewart’s career has been marked by big love for The Big Apple, where he tirelessly supports 9/11 first responders. He has a New York Bronze Medallion for helping pass 2019’s September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act, and this year, he helped inspire Congress to pass the Honoring our PACT Act of 2022, expanding veterans’ healthcare. Stewart turns 60 on November 28.

Dearly Beloved

For years, following a credit typo in her film debut, “Flirting,” Thandie Newton went by “Thandie” in Hollywood, before reclaiming her true name this year in a cover story for British Vogue. Newton, who turned 50 on November 6, was born in London to an English father and Zimbabwean mother. Her Nguri name “Thandiwe” translates to “beloved.” Coincidentally, Newton played the title character in the film adaptation of Toni Morrison’s “Beloved.” She went on to portray Christine in “Crash,” which won her a BAFTA, and Maeve in HBO’s “Westworld,” which landed her an Emmy. Newton’s friend David Schwimmer has called her “the queen of practical jokes,” but she also takes activism seriously, having once led a London flash mob to promote anti-violence and gender equality.

The Talented Mr. Law

Years before landing an Oscar nod for his breakout role in 2000’s “The Talented Mr. Ripley,” Jude Law had a small production company with one-time roommate Ewan McGregor, whom he met at an audition in 1990. The company didn’t last but its founders’ success sure did! Law, who turns 50 on December 29, went from a West End theater standout to megawatt star of “Sherlock Holmes” and, more recently, the “Fantastic Beasts” series. A father of six, Law still lives in his hometown of London, and his five-day-a-week boxing regimen has likely helped him keep up with his kids. Some of them will surely appreciate his two upcoming projects for Disney: “Star Wars: Skeleton Crew” and “Peter Pan & Wendy,” in which he’ll play Captain Hook.

Gimme Moore

Before her breakout role on “General Hospital,” Demi Moore worked as a debt collector. The job sounds like a far cry from the superstar featured in “Ghost” and “G.I. Jane,” but Moore has always been full of surprises. The Best Pack alum was born in Roswell, New Mexico and turns 60 on November 11. She shocked the world when she appeared nude and pregnant on the cover of Vanity Fair, and when she landed “Striptease” for a record-breaking $12.5 million. More recently, her 2018 memoir topped The New York Times Bestseller List, and this summer, she launched her own swimwear line. The mother of three and debt collector (she owns more than 2,000) will next appear in Ryan Murphy’s “Fosse/Verdon: Women.”

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