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Photo shows the Crenshaw district in Los Angeles, California, where actress Meghan Markle was reported to have grown up. — AFP



An exterior view of the Immaculate Heart High School in Hollywood, California where actress Meghan Markle was educated.



Britain's Prince Harry and his fiancée US actress Meghan Markle pose for a photograph in the Sunken Garden in west London following the engagement announcement.

# Meghan Markle follows Grace Kelly in abandoning acting

Meghan Markle says acting will take a back seat when she marries Prince Harry, following the example of screen icon Grace Kelly who abandoned Hollywood to marry into royalty. The 36-year-old has starred in legal drama "Suits" since 2011, but is likely to shed many outside interests as she joins the British royal family following the couple's engagement announcement, according to observers. Markle confirmed in an interview with the BBC she would be giving up acting and would focus much of her attention on the causes that are important to her.

"I don't see it as giving anything up. I see it as a change. It's a new chapter," she said. Markle and Harry, 33, will wed in spring next year, 62 years after silver screen icon Kelly abandoned her glittering career to marry Monaco's Prince Rainier III. Hollywood branding expert Jeetendra Sehdev pointed out however that Markle is not in the same league as the Oscar-winning star of 1950s Hitchcock thrillers "Dial M for Murder," "Rear Window" and "To Catch a Thief." "Americans who have heard of Meghan

will remember her as a working TV actor rather than an celebrity or a Hollywood star," Sehdev, bestselling author of "The Kim Kardashian Principle," told AFP. He added that Britain's first mixed-race royal could nevertheless inspire the British TV industry to create more leading roles for actors of color. "Meghan Markle is the face of the modern princess and there's no reason why she shouldn't keep working in TV after her marriage. The palace will likely have a say in any of her future career choices and roles."

#### Reform too far?

But royal writer Catriona Harvey-Jenner said in a commentary for British lifestyle magazine Cosmopolitan that Markle had made the right decision in shedding her acting ambitions. "Being a senior member of the royal family is a full-time job, and it requires those who do it to patron charities, represent the UK on an international scale and generally maintain the traditions of the royal family," said Harvey-Jenner. "How would she balance all that with a full-time acting role on 'Suits'?"

Markle will be the first American welcomed into the royals since Wallis Simpson—famously also a divorcee—but will probably not, in fact, be a princess. What is far more likely, say experts, is that the couple become a duke and duchess, like William and Kate. As well as starring as paralegal Rachel Zane on "Suits," Markle is an entrepreneur, activist, blogger and fashion designer and would probably be expected to drop many of those pursuits too, to focus on royal activities.

The actress appears to already be winding down her workload, having shut down her lifestyle website, "The Tig," in recent months. Sarika Bose, a lecturer in Victorian literature at the University of British Columbia and a royal expert, said times had changed since Kelly was forced to choose between career and family life. But she added that having a working actress in the fold may yet be a modernizing reform too far for the British throne, which dates back to the merger of England and Scotland in the early 18th century.

#### 'Very charismatic'

"Although British society and the monarchy have changed greatly over the last few decades, there are still possible assumptions people might impose on Ms Markle which are conflated with her acting roles, her life as a celebrity and her public role as a member of the royal family," she told AFP.

Bose said she expected Markle to follow other members of the family in pursuing charitable activities.

"Well before meeting Prince Harry, Markle already demonstrated a serious interest and commitment to social justice initiatives, as a World Vision Global Ambassador and an advocate for political participation and leadership for women through the United Nations," she said. "These activities provide her with both experience and credibility as a patron of causes when she becomes a member of the royal family." The daughter of an African-American mother and white American father of Dutch and Irish descent, Markle's parents divorced when she was aged six. She has half-siblings on her father's side, and grew up in Los Angeles, attending a girls' Roman Catholic school there. After graduating from Northwestern University's School of Communication in 2003, Markle appeared on more than a dozen TV shows including "CSI: NY," "Knight Rider" and "Fringe."

She became more high-profile when she began appearing in "Suits" and secured a small role in the movie "Horrible Bosses" (2011). Clarence Move, TV editor at Awards Daily, described Markle as a "very charismatic" actress and said he was disappointed that she appeared to be set on conforming to tradition. "It would be interesting to see a modern woman continuing her career... but it's not where she seems to be headed," he said. — AFP

## Noor, Hayworth and other American women who married royalty



This combination of file pictures created on November 27, 2017 shows (L-R) a photo taken in 1946 of US actress Rita Hayworth, Queen Noor of Jordan, US actress Meghan Markle, portrait dated 1930's of American-born Wallis Simpson and Princess Grace of Monaco in her garden at home in June 1981 in Paris. — AFP

US actress Meghan Markle, who is to wed Britain's Prince Harry next year, will become the latest American to marry into a royal family. Here's a brief look at five other American women who became princesses or queens:

#### Grace Kelly

Actress Grace Kelly was at the peak of a glittering Hollywood career when she gave it up to marry Prince Rainier III of Monaco in April 1956. Grace Patricia Kelly was born on November 12, 1929 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the third of four children in a wealthy Irish-Catholic family. The blonde beauty made her film debut in 1951 in "Fourteen Hours" and shot to fame the following year alongside Gary Cooper in "High Noon."

She won an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actress for "Mogambo" in 1953 and the Academy Award for Best Actress the following year for "The Country Girl." But Kelly is perhaps best known for her roles in three Alfred Hitchcock movies—"Dial M for Murder," "Rear Window" and "To Catch a Thief." Kelly abandoned her career entirely when she married Prince Rainier after a whirlwind courtship. They had three children: Caroline; Albert, the reigning monarch in Monaco; and Stephanie. Kelly died in September 1982 when her car ran off the road after she suffered a stroke at the wheel.

#### Wallis Simpson

Wallis Simpson was a twice-divorced American woman whose marriage to Britain's King Edward VIII led to him relinquishing the crown in December 1936. Bessie Wallis Warfield was born on June 19, 1896 in Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania. Her father died shortly after her birth.

Warfield married a US naval aviator, Win Spencer, in 1916, divorced him in 1927 and wed a shipping executive, Ernest Simpson, the following year. She became involved with then-Prince Edward in 1934. His relationship with an American divorcee was frowned upon by Britain's royal and political class. Edward became king in January 1936 but abdicated in December that same year and married Simpson—"the woman I love"—in June 1937. Edward and Simpson were named the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Edward died in 1972 and Simpson in 1986. They had no children.

#### Rita Hayworth

Actress Rita Hayworth married Prince Aly Khan—the son of the Aga Khan III, the then spiritual leader of Ismaili Muslims regarded as a direct descendant of the Prophet

Mohammed—in 1949 after the breakup of her marriage to actor-director Orson Welles. Hayworth was born Margarita Carmen Cansino on October 17, 1918 in Brooklyn, New York, to show business parents. After moving to Los Angeles as a teenager, she had bit parts in several movies before adopting the screen name Rita Hayworth and going on to stardom.

Nicknamed the "Love Goddess" by Life magazine, she appeared alongside Fred Astaire in the 1941 film "You'll Never Get Rich" and a host of other hits including "Gilda," in which she performed a strip scene which was seen as scandalous at the time. In 1949, a pregnant Hayworth married Aly Khan. She gave birth to a daughter, Princess Yasmin Aga Khan, in December 1949. She divorced Aly Khan in 1953 after a tumultuous marriage and went on to marry two more times. Hayworth suffered from Alzheimer's disease in her later years and died in New York in May 1987.

#### Queen Noor

Jordan's Queen Noor married King Hussein in 1978, becoming the fourth and final wife of the leader of the Hashemite Kingdom. Lisa Najeeb Halaby was born on August 23, 1951 in Washington to a prominent Christian Arab-American family. Her father was the chief executive of the airline Pan American and also headed the Federal Aviation Administration. A graduate of Princeton University, Halaby married King Hussein in June 1978, converting to his Muslim faith and becoming Queen Noor Al-Hussein. They had four children. Since the king's death in 1999, Queen Noor has been active in philanthropic activities and the nuclear non-proliferation movement.

#### Hope Cooke

New York socialite Hope Cooke married the crown prince of the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Sikkim in 1963 in a real-life story that has been compared to the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "The King and I." Cooke was born on June 24, 1940 in San Francisco. Her mother, a pilot, died in a plane crash when Cooke was just two years old, and she was raised by her grandparents in New York. She met Palden Thondup Namgyal, the widowed crown prince of Sikkim, during a 1959 trip to India as a college student. They fell in love and married in 1963 and she became the Gyalmo, or queen consort, when her husband took the throne in 1965 and became Chogyal, or king. Sikkim was annexed by India in 1973 and Cooke returned to the United States with their two children. She divorced her husband in 1980 and he died two years later. Cooke recounted her life in a 1981 autobiography, "Time Change." — AFP

This file photo taken on November 03, 2012 shows Britain's Prince Harry (R) running out of the VHR (very high ready-ness) tent to scramble his Apache with fellow Pilots at the British controlled flight-line at Camp Bastion in Afghanistan. — AFP photos



## PRINCE HARRY: THE ONCE TROUBLED PLAYBOY GROWS UP

Prince Harry, whose engagement to US actress Meghan Markle was announced on Monday, has been transformed in recent years from an angry young man into one of the British royal family's greatest assets. The youngest son of Prince Charles and the late princess Diana, the 33-year-old has always struggled with his role and for much of his youth seemed to want nothing more than to escape.

He spent 10 years in the British army, serving two tours of duty in Afghanistan, but hit the headlines for his partying and his outspoken criticism of the media. The prince has rebuilt his reputation in recent years, however, through his charity work with veterans and in taking on more and more duties from his grandmother Queen Elizabeth II.

He appears to have inherited his mother's ability to connect with people, as well as her sense of mischief, and with his brother Prince William and sister-in-law Kate have helped put a fresh face on the monarchy. Harry has said that Diana is always in his mind, and has championed many of her charitable causes, including taking an HIV test live on Facebook last year to raise awareness. But he revealed that for a long time he struggled to cope with her death in a Paris car crash in 1997, and sought professional help a few years ago. In a remarkably candid interview earlier this year, the prince admitted he came "very close to a complete breakdown on numerous occasions". He turned a corner and in July 2016 met Markle, a US television actress, through mutual friends. In September this year she declared to Vanity Fair: "We're in love."

#### Shutting down

Harry was born in 1984, the "spare" to his brother William, who will one day inherit the throne. Both educated at the elite Eton school, their childhood was dominated by the messy breakdown of their parents' marriage and Diana's tragically early death. The image of the young princes walking behind the coffin at her funeral—Harry only 12, his brother 15, both in suits—was one of the most enduring images of that day. "I can safely say that losing my mum at the age of 12, and therefore shutting down all of my emotions for the last 20 years, has had a quite serious effect on not only my personal life but also my work as well," Harry said.

At one point, he seemed the archetypal "playboy prince", regularly photographed looking worse for wear and often accompanied by an attractive girl. He caused outrage in 2005 when photographs of him in a swastika

fancy dress outfit appeared in the press. That was the year he entered the army, a conventional path for royal and one that he later admitted "was the best escape I've ever had" from the constant public attention.

In 2008, he had to be pulled out of Afghanistan after a news blackout about his deployment was breached, leading to fears he would be targeted by the Taliban. But he returned in 2012, piloting Apache helicopters during a 20-week tour of duty—only to make headlines again when he said his job was to take insurgents "out of the game".



This file photo taken on August 23, 2012 shows an arrangement of British daily newspapers photographed in London on August 23, 2012 shows the front-page headlines and stories regarding nude pictures of Britain's Prince Harry.

#### 'Share the pressure'

In a series of interviews from the frontline, the prince failed to hide his contempt for the media who he has long blamed for his mother's death. The first confirmation of his relationship with Markle came in an angry statement he issued last year decrying "abuse and harassment" against her. But Harry has learned to use his public profile to promote causes close to his heart, notably a recent campaign about mental health with William and Kate.

He has also set up a sports championship for wounded military personnel, the Invictus Games, which has secured the support of high-profile figures including former US president Barack Obama. Harry still gets himself in scrapes, including telling Newsweek magazine that he did not think anyone in the royal family wanted to be monarch. He also admitted "there was a time I felt I wanted out"—but has previously said "it would be great to have someone else next to me to share the pressure". — AFP