

A Pyle of Laughs

Missi Pyle

Comedic actress Missi Pyle shares her memories of growing up in Katy

Written by Julie Dold

Photos courtesy of Alison Dyer Photography

Growing up, Missi Pyle always knew she wanted to be among the stars, however, she was thinking more along the lines of becoming an astronaut more so than an actress. “To be honest, there were so many things I wanted to do that I decided to be an actress, and then I could get to pretend to be someone who does all of those things,” says Pyle.

Growing up Katy

When Pyle was 4 years old her family moved into a house on Cedar Lane in Katy where she enjoyed riding her bike and four wheelers, and going to pick dewberries with friends. Being the fifth child out of seven, though, led Pyle to ponder ways she could get attention.

One of her favorite pastimes was watching TV and dreaming of how she could get into it and be part of one of those imaginary worlds. She soon found a closer and easier escape: theater through her church, First Baptist Church of Katy. Her dad, Frank, was the music minister, and Pyle performed in multiple plays from that time on.

Business and Bathing Suits

When Pyle was a teenager her family moved to Germantown, TN where she continued acting in high school musicals and eventually went on to perform in community theaters as well. After attending the University of North Carolina's School of the Arts for classical acting, she finished with a showcase in New York City. Pyle soon found out that even with all the finest training, finding a job in the big city was a job in itself. “I went out on zillions of auditions,” recalls Pyle. “I'd rollerblade around Manhattan with a business suit and a bathing suit rolled up in my bag.”

Pyle's hard work eventually paid off, and she was cast as a waitress in *As Good As It Gets* starring Jack Nicholson. It took


a while from that first role, but since then Pyle has gone on to star in movies such as *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Dodgeball*, and 2011's five-time Academy Award winner, *The Artist*. Her favorite film location so far has been in Cape Town, South Africa where she filmed *Home Alone 4*. “It's such a gorgeous city with a crazy history,” shares Pyle. “My eyes were really opened. I also got to go on safari twice with my dad.”

Due to her tall stature it has been hard for her to act alongside men, but she has found that comedic roles have helped her to overcome that obstacle. While comedy is her main focus she has dabbled in a few more serious roles, including works by Shakespeare. “I have more of an affinity for comedy than I do for drama,” says Pyle. “But I am always looking for ways to stretch myself as an actor.” However, even after 25 years Pyle still jokes that she has no clue what she's doing.

Finding Inspiration

To help prepare for a role Pyle tries to read the script, if possible, and then begin memorizing lines as soon as she can. Doing roles on real life characters can be a bit more challenging though, but Pyle has found that hiring an acting coach sometimes helps in “finding” a character. Pyle finds her creativity by watching others and nature to help get her juices flowing.

Pyle has recently found inspiration by watching her younger sister Meredith, who left the Katy area last year to pursue an acting career as well. The two have moved in together and are enjoying their sisterly bonding time. “Her enthusiasm is so inspiring, and we have been doing a lot of singing together,” shares Pyle. “I love, love, love playing the guitar too. I'm terrible, but sometimes I come up with a silly song and it makes me so happy.”



Missi Pyle's first few roles were through her church, First Baptist Church of Katy

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- Missi Pyle

The Von Pyles

Pyle's sister is not her only supporter. The rest of her family, especially her dad who still resides in the Katy area, have been there every step of the way for her. During a high school performance of *Into the Woods*, her father cried and bragged to the women around him about how proud he was of his daughter who played the witch. "I was so blown away by that," says Pyle. "He is so very proud." Pyle's six siblings are all extremely talented as well. Each one is blessed with the gift of song, and they jokingly plan on going on tour as the Von Pyles.

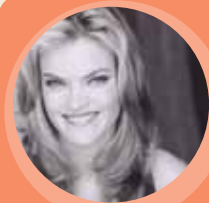
The House of Pyle

Pyle comes back to the Katy area once or twice a year and sometimes drives past her old house. "I'd like to knock on the door and visit the house that built me," shares Pyle. When she thinks of growing up in Katy, she has only happy memories of warm summer nights, spending time with friends, and all the kind people.

There really is nothing to keep this funny lady from flying high and staying busy. She recently closed an off Broadway musical called *BARE*, is busy working on multiple TV projects, and is of course acting on the big screen. She also hopes to start a family soon and enjoys performing live with her bands The Nice Ladies and The Tumbleweeds. KM



JULIE DOLD is a big Missi Pyle fan and remembers laughing hysterically at her in Galaxy Quest and Dodgeball.



Missi Pyle's Movie Roles

- ★ *As Good As It Gets*
- ★ *Big Fish*
- ★ *Dodgeball*
- ★ *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*
- ★ *The Artist*
- ★ *Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters*



Pyle's first role was as a waitress in *As Good As It Gets* with Jack Nicholson



While she has done a few dramatic roles, Pyle's main passion is comedy

THE WORLD OF MISSI



When she's not acting, Pyle can be found performing with her bands The Nice Ladies and The Tumbleweeds



Pyle remembers riding bikes, going dewberry picking, and the warm summer nights in Katy

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