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Martha Stewart

Martha Helen Stewart (née **Kostyra**, Polish: [kɔˈstira]; born August 3, 1941) is an American retail businesswoman, writer, and television personality. As founder of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, she gained success through a variety of business ventures, encompassing publishing, broadcasting, merchandising and e-commerce. She has written numerous bestselling books, is the publisher of *Martha Stewart Living* magazine and hosted two syndicated television programs: *Martha Stewart Living*, which ran from 1993 to 2004, and *Martha*, which ran from 2005 to 2012.

In 2004, Stewart was convicted of felony charges related to the ImClone stock trading case; she served five months in federal prison and was released in March 2005. There was speculation that the incident would effectively end her media empire,^[1] but in 2005 Stewart began a comeback campaign^[2] and her company returned to profitability in 2006.^[3] Stewart rejoined the board of directors of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia in 2011^[4] and became chairwoman of her namesake company again in 2012.^[5] The company was acquired by Sequential Brands in 2015.^[6]

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Martha Stewart



Stewart in 2019

Born	Martha Helen Kostyra <div>August 3, 1941</div> <div> Jersey City, New Jersey, U.S.</div>
Alma mater	 Barnard College
Occupation	Businesswoman, writer, television personality
Spouse	Andrew Stewart (m. 1961; div. 1990)
Children	 Alexis Stewart
Relatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jimmy Kimmel (cousin) Jonathan Kimmel (cousin)
Website	marthastewart.com (https://marthastewart.com)
Signature	

References

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Early life

Martha Stewart was born in Jersey City, New Jersey, on August 3, 1941.^[7] She is the second of six children^[8] born to parents Edward Kostyra (1912–1979) and Martha (née Ruszkowski; 1914–2007) and is of Polish heritage.^{[9][10][11]} Both her parents were teachers, her father later becoming a pharmaceutical salesman.^[12] When Stewart was three years old, the family moved to Nutley, New Jersey.^{[13][14]} She adopted the name "Grace" for her Catholic confirmation name.^[15]

When Stewart was 10, she worked as the occasional babysitter for the children of Mickey Mantle, Yogi Berra, and Gil McDougald, all players for the New York Yankees.^[16] Mickey and Merlyn Mantle had four sons, whom Stewart watched and for whom she organized birthday parties.^[17] She also began modeling. At 15, Stewart was featured in a television commercial for Unilever.^[18] She went on to appear in television commercials and in magazines, including one of Tareyton's "Smokers would rather fight than switch!" cigarette advertisements.^[19] During her college years, she supplemented her scholarship money through "modeling jobs at \$50/hour – which was a lot of money at that time."^[20] Her clients included Chanel.^[21]

Stewart's mother taught her how to cook and sew.^[22] Later, she learned the processes of canning and preserving when she visited her grandparents' home in Buffalo, New York.^[23] Her father had a passion for gardening and passed on much of his knowledge and expertise to his daughter.^[22] Stewart was also active in many extracurricular activities, such as the school's newspaper and art club.^[24]

Stewart graduated from Nutley High School.^[25] She attended Barnard College of Columbia University, originally planning to major in chemistry, but switching to art, history, and later architectural history. To help pay her college tuition, she did fashion modeling for Chanel.^[26] During this time, she met Andrew Stewart, who finished his law degree at Yale Law School.^[27] They married in July 1961.^{[28][29]} She returned to Barnard a year after their marriage to graduate with a double major in history and architectural history.^{[26][30]}

Career

In 1967, Martha Stewart began a second career as a stockbroker, her father-in-law's profession.^{[31][32]}

Meanwhile, Andrew Stewart founded a publishing house and served as chief executive of several others. Andrew and Martha Stewart moved to Westport, Connecticut, where they purchased and restored the 1805 farmhouse on Turkey Hill Road that would later become the model for the TV studio of *Martha Stewart Living*. During the project, Stewart's panache for restoring and decorating became apparent.^[33]

In 1976, Stewart started a catering business in her basement with a friend from her modeling days,

Norma Collier. The venture quickly became successful but soured when Collier alleged that Stewart was difficult to work with, and was also taking catering jobs on the side. Stewart soon bought Collier's portion of the business. Stewart was also hired as the manager of a gourmet food store, the Market Basket, but after a disagreement with the owners at the mini-mall she was forced out and opened her own store.^[34]

Andrew had become the president of prominent New York City publisher Harry N. Abrams, Inc.^{[32][35]} In 1977, he was responsible for releasing the English-language edition of *The Secret Book of Gnomes* series, by Dutch authors Wil Huygen and Rien Poortvliet, which quickly became a blockbuster success and was on *The New York Times* Best Seller list.^[36] He contracted Stewart's company to cater the book release party, where Stewart was introduced to Alan Mirken, head of Crown Publishing Group.^{[37][38]}



Stewart at the *Time 100* Gala in 2010.

Mirken was impressed by Stewart's talent as a chef and hostess and later contacted her to develop a cookbook, featuring recipes and photos from the parties that Stewart hosted. The result was her first book, *Entertaining* (December 13, 1982),^[39] ghostwritten by Elizabeth Hawes.^[40]

Following the success of *Entertaining*, Stewart released many more books under the Clarkson Potter publishing imprint, including *Martha Stewart's Quick Cook* (1983), *Martha Stewart's Hors d'Oeuvres* (1984), *Martha Stewart's Pies & Tarts* (1985), *Weddings* (1987), which was also ghostwritten by Elizabeth Hawes, *The Wedding Planner* (1988), *Martha Stewart's Secrets for Entertaining* (1988), *Martha Stewart's Quick Cook Menus* (1988), and *Martha Stewart's Christmas* (1989), among others. During this time, she also authored dozens of newspaper columns, magazine articles, and other pieces on homemaking, and made numerous television appearances on programs such as *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and *Larry King Live*.^{[8][29]}

Andrew and Martha Stewart separated in 1987 and divorced in 1990.^{[8][29]}

Later career

In 1990, Stewart signed with Time Publishing Ventures to develop a new magazine, *Martha Stewart Living*, for which Stewart would serve as editor-in-chief. The first issue was released in late 1990 with an initial rate base of 250,000. Circulation would peak in 2002 at more than 2 million copies per issue.^[41]

In 1993, Stewart began a weekly half-hour television program, also called *Martha Stewart Living*, based on her magazine. The show expanded to weekdays in 1997 and later to a full hour show in 1999 with half-hour episodes on weekends, and ran until 2004. Stewart also became a frequent contributor to NBC's *Today Show* and later to CBS's *The Early Show*, and starred in several prime time holiday specials on the CBS network.^[42]

On the cover of their May 1995 issue, *New York Magazine* declared Stewart "the definitive American woman of our time".^[43]