

Harper Lee Biography

- Born on April 28, 1926 in Monroeville, Alabama.
- Her mother was a homemaker, and her father practiced law.
- At one point in his career, Amasa Lee, once defended two black men accused of murdering a white storekeeper. Both clients were hanged.
- As a child, Lee was an unruly tomboy. She got into fights, talked back to teachers, and refused to conform to society's expectations.
- Once in high school, she was fortunate to have a gifted English teacher who introduced her to challenging literature and the rigors of writing well. She loved 19th century British literature best, and hoped to become the "Jane Austen of south Alabama".
- At the U of A, she found a home on the campus newspaper. Eventually she became editor-in-chief of the Rammer Jammer, a quarterly humor magazine on campus.
- Lee entered law school, but she hated it. Instead, she left to pursue writing in New York.

Harper Lee Biography (cont.)

- She spent 8 years working odd jobs before she finally showed a manuscript to an editor. 2½ years of rewriting followed.
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published in 1960 and quickly climbed the best-seller lists, where it remained for 88 weeks.
- In 1961, the novel won the Pulitzer Prize.
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* has sold more than 30 mil copies in 18 languages.
- In 2011, President Obama awarded her the National Medal of the Arts.
- Lee led a quiet and guarded private life. Her second novel, Go Set a Watchman, was published in 2015.
- She died on February 19, 2016.