Phil McGraw (born September 1, 1950), known as Dr. Phil, is an American television personality, author, psychologist, and the host of the television show Dr. Phil, which debuted in 2002. McGraw first gained celebrity status with appearances on The Oprah Winfrey Show in the late 1990s. In 2017, Forbes listed his earnings at $79 million for the previous 12 months, and ranked him the 15th highest earning celebrity in the world.

Early life
McGraw was born in Vinita, Oklahoma, the son of Joseph J. McGraw, Jr. and his wife, Anne Geralde "Jery" (née Stevens). He grew up with two older sisters, Deana and Donna, and younger sister Brenda in the oilfields of North Texas, where his father was an equipment supplier. During McGraw's childhood, his family moved so his father could pursue a lifelong goal of becoming a psychologist.

McGraw attended Shawnee Mission High School in Overland Park, Kansas. In 1968, he was awarded a football scholarship to the University of Tulsa, where he played middle linebacker under coach Glenn Dobbs. On November 23 of that year, McGraw's team lost to the University of Houston 19-0, which is one of the most lopsided games in college football history. Coach Dobbs retired after that season and McGraw transferred to Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas.

Education and early career
McGraw graduated in 1975 from Midwestern State University with a B.S. in psychology. He went on to earn an M.A. in experimental psychology in 1976, and a Ph.D. degree in clinical psychology in 1979 at the University of North Texas, where his dissertation was titled "Rheumatoid Arthritis: A Psychological Intervention." McGraw was guided through the doctoral program by Frank Lawlis, who later became the primary contributing psychologist for the Dr. Phil television show.

After obtaining his doctorate, McGraw joined Dr. Joe Gentry, in Wichita Falls, Texas, where the elder McGraw had established his private psychology practice. In 1983, McGraw and his father joined Thema Box, a successful Texas therapy practice, in presenting "Pathways seminars," "experience-based training which allows individuals to achieve and create their own results." Critics claim that many of the "phrases and the terminology and the quaint sayings" used by McGraw on the Oprah and Dr. Phil shows were coined by Box and presented by McGraw in this seminar. McGraw admits that some of the material from Life Strategies, his first best-seller, is taken directly from the Pathways seminar. However, he has never mentioned Box or his contributions to his success in any of his books or TV shows. Eight years after joining Box, McGraw signed an agreement for the sale of his Pathways seminar stock for $252,000 without notifying either his father or Box of the impending sale. Box founded her own seminars titled "Choices."

Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists
On October 21, 1988, the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists determined that McGraw had hired a former patient for "part-time temporary employment." Specifically, the board cited "a possible failure to provide proper separation between termination of therapy and the initiation of employment," issued a letter of reprimand and imposed administrative penalties. The board also investigated claims made by the patient of inappropriate contact initiated by McGraw, but the "Findings of Fact" document issued by the board on October 21, 1988, at the end of its investigation includes no reference to any physical contact of any kind. It specifically identified "the therapeutic and business relationships" as constituting McGraw's sole source with the board. McGraw fulfilled all terms of the board's requirements, and the board closed its complaint file in June 1990.

Lack of license to practice
McGraw no longer holds a license to practice psychology of any kind in Texas or any other state in the United States. McGraw has been involved in several controversies which put his license to practice at risk. He was brought up on ethics charges for having an inappropriate non-physical relationship with a patient in Texas in January 1989 and had a formal criminal complaint filed against him in California in 2008 for practicing psychology without a professional license or certification and violating doctor-patient confidentiality in connection with the now infamous incident with Britney Spears in 2008 (see below).

Dr. Phil McGraw photographed by Jerry Avram for the cover of Newsweek magazine, 2001

McGraw is shown to have "voluntarily surrendered" his Texas license in 2006, and he has never held a license to practice psychology in any other state, including California. This has led several leading clinical psychologists in California to question whether Dr. Phil's program violates the law by offering the services of a "psychologist", despite the voluminous paperwork that his production company asks guests to sign stating that they are only getting "advice" on the program. Practicing psychology without a license in California is a felony.

Courtroom Sciences, Inc.
In 1990, McGraw joined lawyer Gary Dobbs in co-founding Courtroom Sciences, Inc. (CSI), a trial consulting firm through which McGraw later came into contact with Oprah Winfrey. Eventually, CSI became a profitable enterprise, advising Fortune 500 companies and insured plaintiffs in achieving settlements. McGraw is no longer an officer or director of the company.

Starting in 2002, McGraw ceased consulting practice. He kept his license current and in good standing until he elected to retire it 15 years later in 2006. Appearing on the Today Show in January 2008, McGraw said that he has made it "very clear" that his current work does not involve the practice of psychology. He also said that he had "retired from psychology."

The TV show, Dr. Phil, is based on his experience as a trial consultant, and he is credited as one of the creators of the series.

Television career
Oprah Winfrey and the Dr. Phil show
In 1998, Oprah Winfrey hired McGraw's legal consulting firm CSI to prepare her for the Amarillo Texas beat trial. Winfrey was so impressed with McGraw that she thanked him for her victory in that case, which ended in 1998.

The next year, McGraw published his first best-selling book, Life Strategies. In the next four years, McGraw published three additional best-selling relationship books, along with workbooks to complement them. As of September 2002, McGraw formed Peteski Productions and launched his own syndicated daily television show, Dr. Phil, produced by Winfrey's Harpo Studios. The format is an advice show, where he tackles a different topic on each show, offering advice for his guests' troubles.

Weight loss products
In 2003, McGraw entered the weight loss business, selling shakes, energy bars, and supplements. These products were promoted on his show with his sisters Deana and Brenda and nephew Tony among the featured testimonials on the show. These products' labels, which carried the brand name "Shape It Up, Woe, Woe", stated: "These products contain scientifically researched levels of ingredients that can help you change your behavior to control your weight." This met with swift criticism from various sources, accusing McGraw (a clinical psychologist, and not a physician) of lacking the expertise to recommend weight loss products. Facing a Federal Trade Commission investigation into Shape It Up's claims, McGraw pulled his supplements off the market in March 2004, and the FTC dropped its probe. In October 2005, several people who used McGraw's products declared an intent to file a class action lawsuit against him, claiming that although the supplements cost $12 per month they did not stimulate weight loss. McGraw settled the suit in September 2006 for $10.5 million. Some of the settlement ($6 million) may be paid to the plaintiffs in the form of vitamins. In 2006, some of McGraw's former clients were named in a lawsuit against him for being a "Moocher," which has since been settled.

The Making of Dr. Phil unauthorized biography (2003)
The Making of Dr. Phil is a biography by Sophia Dilling, a reporter from the Dallas Morning News, and Lisa Gutierrez, a reporter from The Kansas City Star. The book probes McGraw's history, with interviews of his childhood friends and former classmates. The book reports that McGraw allegedly used unethical business practices in a gym business early in his career, that he was allegedly abusive to his first wife and to his staff, while noting that he overcame adversity through setting goals and was persistent in achieving success. The book received no promotional help from McGraw or his associates.

In 2005, McGraw published another best-selling book, Family First, along with a workbook. He also signed a five-year extension of his syndication deal with his show's distributors. King World Productions, Inc. The deal will pay McGraw $15 million a year and keep the show in production through the 2013-2014 television season.

Spin-off shows
Also in 2005, McGraw's son Jay's television show, Renovate My Family (a clone of ABC's Extreme Makeover: Home Edition) was canceled at the start of its second season following a renovating family's lawsuit. Jay McGraw and Phil McGraw then formed Stage 39 Productions. A week later, McGraw and son announced a new show called Moochers (a clone of ABC's Knocked Out), however, the show was canceled before any episodes aired.

McGraw also released another book, Love Smart, which did not achieve the success of his previous bestsellers.

In 2006, the Dr. Phil House (a clone of CBS's Big Brother) began airing as part of the Dr. Phil television show. Following a protest by neighbors, the house in Los Angeles was shut down, and production resumed on a sound stage on a studio back lot. McGraw reached the number 22 spot on the Forbes Celebrity 100 list, with income of $45 million.
McGraw married his first wife, an ex-cheerleader and homecoming queen named Debbie Higgins McCall, in 1970, when he was 20 years old. According to her, McGraw was domineering and would not allow her to participate in the family business. She claimed that she was confined to domestic duties, which included lifting weights to improve her bustline.


Kalpoe lawsuit (2006) McGraw was named a co-defendant, along with CBS Television, in a 2006 lawsuit filed in relation to the disappearance of Natalie Holloway. The lawsuit was filed by Deepak Kalpoe and his brother, Satish Kalpoe, who claimed that an interview they did with McGraw, aired in September 2005, was "manipulated and later broadcast as being accurate, and which portrays Deepak Kalpoe and Satish Kalpoe 'as engaging in criminal activity against Natalie Holloway and constitutes defamation.' The Kalpoe brothers claimed invasion of privacy, fraud, deceit, defamation, emotional distress, and civil conspiracy in the suit, which was filed in the Los Angeles Superior Court. On March 17, 2015, the lawsuit against McGraw and CBS was dismissed. The court records disclosed the lawsuit by Deepak and Satish Kalpoe was rejected one week before the civil trial was set to begin.


The visit appeared to be part of an attempt at getting Spears, her parents and her court-appointed lawyer involved with the show. "We have decided not to go forward with the story as our guidelines have been compromised," said Travis Stork, a former BOP President, on the Today Show that this incident was not a matter that the law covers or would be concerned about.

Polk County, Florida, controversy (2008) On April 13, 2008, a producer for the Dr. Phil show secured $20,000 bail for the misleader of a group of eight teenage girls who viciously beat another girl and videotaped the attack. The teen had been booked at the Polk County Jail on charges that included kidnapping and assault. Producers of the Dr. Phil show had made plans to tape a one-hour show devoted to the incident and had sent a production assistant to Orlando to help book guests for the show, but when news broke that the Dr. Phil show producer had posted bail for the teen, the outcry caused the show to cancel their plans. "In this case certain staffers went beyond our guidelines," said Theresa Corigliano, spokesperson for the Dr. Phil show. "We have decided not to go forward with the story as our guidelines have been compromised."

Riccio lawsuit (2008) McGraw was sued by Thomas Riccio, the memorabilia collector responsible for taping the Las Vegas robbery that led to D. J. Simpson being convicted. Riccio sued McGraw in Los Angeles Superior Court for defamation, fraud, intentional infliction of emotional distress and false light for what Riccio claims to have been deceitful editing of the Dr. Phil Show on which he appeared in early October 2008. The claims of defamation, intentional infliction of emotional distress and false light were dismissed, with the judge finding that it was protected speech under the First Amendment.

Charitable foundation McGraw announced the formation of the Dr. Phil Foundation, which raises funds to fight childhood obesity, on October 22, 2003. The Foundation also supports charitable organizations that help address the emotional, spiritual, and monetary needs of children and families.

Personal life McGraw married his first wife, an ex-cheerleader and homecoming queen named Debbie Higgins McCall, in 1970, when he was 20 years old. According to her, McGraw was domineering and would not allow her to participate in the family business. She claimed that she was confined to domestic duties, which included lifting weights to improve her bustline.


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McGraw's son, Jay McGraw, has partially followed in his father's footsteps, publishing books aimed at teenagers based on McGraw's books and working for Stage 29. Jay McGraw became engaged to Erica Dahm, one of the famous Playboy Playmate triplets. The elder McGraw was best man at his son's wedding, despite the fact that he is vocally against pornography, which was held at his home in Beverly Hills.

McGraw is also a private pilot, with an instrument rating, flying single-engine airplanes. McGraw has identified himself as a Christian.

On October 21, 2017 he was threatened with lawsuits when he accidentally hit a skateboarder with his Mercedes-Benz.

Selected works

Filography

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Frasier</td>
<td>Himself</td>
<td>Episode The Dead and Dr. Phil</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Grey's Anatomy</td>
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<td>2 episodes</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Grey's Anatomy</td>
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<td>Film, Camero appearance</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>The Simpson</td>
<td>Himself</td>
<td>(voice over role)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Madea Goes to Jail</td>
<td></td>
<td>Episode Treehouse of Horror XVI</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Curb Your Enthusiasm</td>
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<td>Episode Vehicle Fatality</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Hannah Montana</td>
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<td>Episode 1 Always Remember You</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Wild Rose</td>
<td>Himself</td>
<td>Episode April 11, 2016</td>
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References
Born in 1950, Dr. Phil McGraw was a college football player who got his Ph.D. in psychology. He quit his private practice to start Pathways, a self-motivation seminar, as well as a company called Courtroom Sciences. Life strategist and television host Dr. Phil was born Phillip Calvin McGraw on September 1, 1950, in Vinita, Oklahoma. Dr. Phil was raised in both Oklahoma and in Texas. Dr. Phil—aka Phillip McGraw—burst onto the talk-show circuit in the late 1990s as a regular guest on The Oprah Winfrey Show. He immediately captured a fan base with his blunt-fire style of therapy and folksy Texas twang. McGraw proved so popular that in 2002, he launched his own program, The Dr. Phil Show, which earned the highest ratings for a new talk show since Winfrey started hers in 1986. Part showman, part psychologist, McGraw draws six million daily viewers to his program. Dr. Phil McGraw was born in Vinita, Oklahoma, to Anne Geraldine "Jerry" (Stevens) and Joseph J. "Joe" McGraw, Jr., an equipment supplier for oil fields. He earned his doctorate degree in psychology from the University of North Texas [1979]. In 1980 he founded Courtroom Sciences, Inc., a full-service trial sciences firm.
Dr. Phil uses the power of television to tell compelling stories about real people. Dr. Phil to an 18-year-old dating a 14-year-old: "You do realize that it is a violation of the law." Full story: drphil.tv/11917. 293. 272. Phil In The Blanks #30 - Susan Constantine.

Talk show in which Dr. Phil McGraw invites guests to confront their problems. While filming a show about being an uncontrollable teen, Danielle steals a Dr. Phil (2002) crew member's car; Barbara Ann wants to turn 13-year-old Danielle over to authorities. 8.5. 0. Born in 1950, Dr. Phil McGraw was a college football player who got his Ph.D. in psychology. He quit his private practice to start Pathways, a self-motivation seminar, as well as a company called Courtroom Sciences. Life strategist and television host Dr. Phil was born Phillip Calvin McGraw on September 1, 1950, in Vinita, Oklahoma. Dr. Phil was raised in both Oklahoma and in Texas.