

Cultural Daily

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PIPER LAURIE Remembered

Elisa Leonelli · Sunday, October 15th, 2023

Upon learning of her passing, on October 14 at the age of 91, I went to look at a photo layout and interview I did with [Piper Laurie](#) at her Los Angeles home in 1985.



The actress, who played Paul Newman's girlfriend in *The Hustler* (1961), said: "She was a very sad and fascinating character, ahead of her time, a neurotic personality with many layers."



Of Sissy Spacek's mother in *Carrie* (1976) directed by Brian De Palma from the 1974 novel by Stephen King, Laurie said: "A religious fanatic who loved her daughter and her religion too much. I end up killing my daughter and then her powers kill me."

She has high praise for her director: "I loved working with De Palma, he's wonderful. He's so unlike what you might imagine him to be, very quiet, easy-going, jovial and warm. There is something solid and relaxed about him, I always thought of him as a young rabbi. He made his actors feel that anything they did was good and right, so we weren't afraid to try things, and that's a great gift."



Of acting opposite a young Mel Gibson in *Tim* (1979). “I played an older, successful business woman who lives in Australia. When her gardener quits, this young man who looked like a Greek God, and was also slightly retarded, is hired to replace him. They develop a wonderful friendship and they fall in love.”

She liked her costar: “Mel is an enchanting person and terrifically talented. He has a great sense of humor, he is a wonderful clown.”



Of Ronald Reagan, whom she dated when she was cast as his teenage daughter in *Louisa* (1950), her first film, she said: “Although I don’t agree with his politics now, I have to admit that he was very charming then, adorable and incredible.”

Piper Laurie played the deaf girl’s estranged mother in *Children of a Lesser God* (1986) directed by Randa Haines with Marlee Matlin and William Hurt. She acted with Danny De Vito in *Other People’s Money* (1991) by Norman Jewison, with Walter Matthau in *The Grass Harp* (1995).



The actress describe how her passion for sculpting was born: “When I got married and had a child, I became a great baker of bread and pies. I also learned to carve stone and work with marble, a very long process that takes a lot of patience. This sculpture that represents a fetus took me three months working every day.”

Laurie received critical praise for her television performances in *The Thorn Birds* (1983), *Promise* (1986), *Twin Peaks* (1990).

In 2011 Piper Laurie published her memoir *Learning to Live Out Loud*.

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