

REESE WITHERSPOON LINEAGE

WILLIAM T. BYRNE, b. 1768, Ireland, md 1796, Burke Co., NC to **RHODA ENGLAND**, 2 October 1773, White Co., TN =

LAWRENCE BYRNE, b. 8 August 1798, Burke Co., NC – d. 19 January 1854, Jasper, Putnam Co., TN md the 12th of June 1821, Putnam Co., TN to 1st **MARTHA “PATSY” JARED**, b. 10 October 1795 = (Lawrence Byrne md 2nd Sarah Carlisle, b. 28 Feb. 1803, Mecklenberg Co., NC – d. 20 Nov. 1881, Putnam Co., TN)

TERRELL BYRNE, b. 8 April 1826 – d. 17 August 1905, md **MARY J. SPURLOCK**, b. 4 August 1835, d/o Col. Josiah Spurlock & Leah Manier = (Col. Josiah Spurlock, a physician and surgeon. Veteran of the War of 1812, where he was raised to the rank of Colonel. He was with Andrew Jackson in the Battle of New Orleans in 1815 and served as companion and bodyguard to “Old Hickory.” Mary Jane Spurlock Byrne was their youngest daughter, the last of ten born).

BASCOM BYRNE, b. 20 October 1856, md **DORTHULA WATTS**, b. 8 April 1855, d/o Thomas Watts & Matilda Clark =

CARRIE BYRNE, b. 20 November 1892, TN, md on the 13th of August 1912, TN to **WILLIAM GILBERT “GIL” DRAPER**, b. 13 August 1891, near Cookeville, TN – d. 6 September 1963, s/o Oliver Newton Draper & Mary Ollie Cummins =

(Gilbert “Gill” Draper was a successful businessman of Cookeville, TN. Wm. Gilbert & Carrie (Byrne) Draper are both buried in Cookeville City Cemetery, Putnam Co., TN).

(Oliver Newton Draper, b. 1 Nov. 1857, near Smyrna, Putnam Co., TN, md 25th to Aug. 1878, Cummins Falls to Mary Ollie Cummins, b. 25 Apr. 1857, Cummins Falls. Oliver Newton Draper, s/o Ridley Draper, b. 30 Dec. 1825 – d. 10 Jun. 1873, Putnam Co., TN, md on the 28th of Sept. 1848, Putnam Co., TN to Rebecca Kuykendall, b. 13 Jan. 1828 – d. 19 May 1905, both buried in Kuykendall graveyard, Putnam Co., TN).

DORETHERA ANNE DRAPER, b. 9 November 1917, Cookeville, TN, md on the 17th of June 1941 to **JAMES WILLIAM WITHERSPOON**, b. 13 March 1917, Midlothian, TX, s/o Mack Alfred Witherspoon & Lula Curtis. =

DR. JOHN DRAPER WITHERSPOON, b. 1 April 1942, Atlanta, GA, md **BETTY REESE** =

(Dr. John Witherspoon is a Georgia born otolaryngologist who previously served as a lieutenant colonel in the U. S. Army reserves. Betty (Reese) Witherspoon is from Harriman, TN, has a Ph. D. in pediatric nursing, and works as a professor nursing at Vanderbilt University. Children: Laura Jeanne Reese Witherspoon & John Draper Witherspoon Jr.) (Dr. John Draper Witherspoon had a brother named James Byrne Witherspoon, b. 24 Aug. 1948, Nashville, TN).

LAURA JEANNE REESE WITHERSPOON, b. March 22, 1976, New Orleans, LA, md on the 5th of June 1999, North Charleston, SC to **MATTHEW RYAN PHILLIPE**, b. 10 September 1974, New Castle, DE, s/o Richard & Susan Phillippe. (marriage ended on Oct. 5, 2007 with final divorce arrangements settled on 13 June 2008 according to court documents) Laura Jeanne Reese Witherspoon md 2nd ON THE 26TH of March 2011, Ojai Valley, CA to **JIM TOTH**=

AVA ELIZABETH PHILLIPE, b. 9 September 1999 – named after Phillippe’s grandmother.

DEACON REESE PHILLIPE, b. 23 October 2003 – named after Phillippe’s distant relative Deacon Phillippe, Pittsburgh Pirates baseball pitcher).

She was born Laura Jean [Reese Witherspoon](#) in New Orleans on the 22nd of March, 1976. She'd spend the first four years of her life in Wiesbaden, Germany where her father, John, was a lieutenant colonel in the

US Army reserves, there to fulfill his Vietnam draft obligation. After this, the family - John, wife Betty, first child John Jr and little Laura Jean - would return to America to settle in Nashville.

This was a predictable move for the Witherspoons, being deeply rooted in the South. Their earliest American ancestor, another John, had crossed the pond from Scotland, becoming President of the prestigious Princeton University. Such was his standing that he was asked to sign the original Declaration of Independence. Eventually the family would migrate to the southern states, where they'd be a paragon of the region's genteel aristocracy.

Many decades later, John, who'd graduate top of his class at Yale, would meet Betty while the pair were studying at the University of Tennessee. They'd marry, but their studies would continue, John becoming a surgeon specializing in the ear, nose and throat, while Betty, who'd earn five separate degrees, would become a Ph.D in pediatric nursing, winding up as a professor of nursing at Vanderbilt University.



Hailing from such stock, Laura Jean was bound to either hit the heights or crash and burn. Sensible from the start, she chose the former. At school, as a self-confessed "huge book dork", she achieved excellent grades, and would be taken on at the famous Harpeth Hall School For Girls in Nashville (former alumni including the Grand Ole Opry's Minnie Pearl and pop singer Amy Grant). She'd be both a cheerleader and a debutante, though in later years she'd complain whenever this was mentioned, clearly believing that it undermined her reputation for intelligence and professionalism (her part in *Legally Blonde* would be close to her heart).

Coming from such an academic family, and never having been considered exceptionally good-looking, she was always driven to achieve. Indeed, her parents nicknamed her Little Miss Type A.

She might easily have followed her parents into medicine. But Nashville being a showbiz city, entertainment was always on the cards, too. Her path was picked early, and as is so often the case, by fluke. When Laura Jean was just 7, the parents of a friend of hers decided to run an ad for their flower shop. Laura Jean was suggested as a model and chosen. Immediately, she was hooked, beginning acting lessons and forming dreams of movie stardom straight away. By 11, she was winning a 10 State Talent Award - she was set fair.

By 13, regular work was coming her way. She won TV ads for Ames and Opryland, and also came to the attention of movie casters. A film was to be shot locally, to be called *Man In The Moon* and directed by Robert Mulligan, famed helmsman of *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *The Summer Of '42* and *The Other*. Laura Jean's friends were trying out as extras, so she went along, too, was given some lines to read, and so impressed were the casting directors that she was flown instantly to Los Angeles for a screen test. Within a month she was hired as the star of the film, and took her mother's maiden name to lend weight to her cause. [Reese Witherspoon](#) was on her way.

The Fifties-set *Man In The Moon* was a wonderful debut. In it, Reese played Dani Trant, a 14-year-old country-girl tomboy who falls in love for the first time with her 17-year-old neighbor (her first words on-screen were "I love Elvis so much"). He thinks he's too old for her, and says so, but gradually begins to fall for her. Meanwhile, she's discussing love, looks, popularity and other subjects of vital importance to teenagers with her older sister, who at this moment is getting turned over by a local brute. Suffice to say, things get tough when Reese's lover meets her sister...

Reese's performance was truly touching, and mature beyond all expectation, causing critic Roger Ebert to gush "Her first kiss is one of the most perfect little scenes I've ever seen in a movie". Tess Harper, who played Dani's mother, later revealed that the cast had known Reese as Little Meryl. High praise indeed, given that the cast included the likes of the Oscar-nominated Sam Waterston. And it was no accident.

Already clear on the kind of career she wanted and the kind of actress she wanted to be, Reese's influences did include [Meryl Streep](#), along with [Susan Sarandon](#), Frances McDormand and Holly Hunter. This would be made even clearer by Witherspoon's choice of roles in the future.

Witherspoon was born at the former Southern Baptist Hospital (now the [Ochsner Baptist Medical Center](#)) in [New Orleans, Louisiana](#), where her parents were living while her father was a student at [Tulane University](#) medical school.^{[11][2]} Her father, John Witherspoon, is a [Georgia-born otolaryngologist](#) who previously served as a lieutenant colonel in the [U.S. Army reserves](#).^{[3][4]} Her mother, Betty (*née* Reese), is from [Harriman, Tennessee](#), has a Ph.D. in pediatric nursing, and works as a professor of nursing at [Vanderbilt University](#).^{[4][5]} Witherspoon has claimed to be a descendant of [Scottish-born John Witherspoon](#), the sixth president of [Princeton University](#) and a signatory of the [United States Declaration of Independence](#).^{[6][7]} This genealogical claim, however, has never been verified.^{[8][9]} Because Witherspoon's father worked for the U.S. military in [Wiesbaden, West Germany](#), she lived there for four years as a small child.^{[5][10]} After returning to the U.S., she settled and spent her childhood in [Nashville, Tennessee](#).^{[5][10]} Although her parents are [Catholics](#)^[11] she was raised as an [Episcopalian](#).^[12]

Witherspoon was selected as a fashion model for a florist's television advertisements at age seven, which motivated her to take acting lessons.^{[13][14]} At age eleven she took first place in the Ten-State Talent Fair.^{[13][15]} Witherspoon received good grades in school;^[13] she loved reading and considered herself "a big dork who read loads of books."^[2] On mentioning her love for books, she said, "I get crazy in a bookstore. It makes my heart beat hard because I want to buy everything."^[12] Witherspoon attended middle school at Harding Academy and graduated from the prestigious all-girls' [Harpeth Hall School](#) in Nashville, Tennessee, during which time she was a [cheerleader](#).^{[15][16]} She attended [Stanford University](#) as an English literature major.^[17] After completing one year of studies, she left Stanford to pursue an acting career.^[16]

Witherspoon is proud of the "definitive [Southern](#) upbringing" she received, which, as she said, gave her "a sense of family and tradition" and taught her about "being conscientious about people's feelings, being polite, being responsible and never taking for granted what you have in your life."^{[16][18]} Witherspoon is described as a "multi-achiever" and was given the nickname "Little Type A" by her parents.^{[19][20]} On discussing her early achievements, she told [Interview](#) magazine, "I just don't see any of it as that remarkable. Maybe that's the attitude I choose to have to keep me sane and keep my feet on the ground. I grew up in an environment where women accomplished a lot. And if they weren't able to, it was because they were limited by society."^[4]

William T. Byrne md Rhoda England =

Dorcus Byrne, b. 10 December 1803 – d. 20 December 1833, Putnam Co., TN, md 31st of Oct. 1824, Putnam Co., TN to **Joseph Jared**, b. 17 March 1800, TN – d. 11 Feb. 1885, TN=
(**Joseph Jared** md 2nd **Rachel Rhea Ray**, d/o **Joseph Ray & Kessiah Hensley**).

Dorcus (Byrne) Jared was a sister to **Malinda (Byrne) Jared** & to **Lawrence Byrne** who married **Martha "Pasty" Jared**.

*See Jared and Byrnes families and related families at:

<http://www.ajlambert.com>