

Carrie Underwood

Carrie Marie Underwood is an American country singer, songwriter and actress who rose to fame as the winner of the fourth season of the television program *American Idol*, in 2005. Underwood has since become a multi-platinum selling recording artist, a winner of several Grammy Awards, Billboard Music Awards and American Music Awards, a Golden Globe Award nominee, a three-time Academy of Country Music and Country Music Association Female Vocalist winner, and a two-time ACM Entertainer of the Year. She is the first-ever female artist to win back-to-back Academy of Country Music (ACM) Awards for Entertainer of the Year, in 2009 and 2010. Underwood was inducted into and became a member of the Grand Ole Opry in 2008. She was also inducted into the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame in 2009. Billboard named Underwood Country Music's reigning Queen in 2012.



Underwood was born to Stephen and Carole Underwood on March 10, 1983, in Muskogee, Oklahoma. She was raised on her parents' farm in the rural town of Checotah, Oklahoma. Her father worked in a sawmill while her mother taught elementary school. During her childhood, Underwood performed at Robbins Memorial Talent Show and sang at her local church. She later sang for local events in Checotah.

A local admirer arranged for her to go to Nashville when she was 14 to audition for Capitol Records. In 1996, Capitol Records was preparing a contract for Underwood but cancelled it when company management changed. She graduated from Checotah High School in 2001 as salutatorian. She chose not to pursue singing after graduation. She attended Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, graduating magna cum laude in 2006 with a bachelor's degree in mass communication and an emphasis in *journalism*. During her college years, she was a page for Oklahoma State Representative Bobby Frame, waited tables at a pizzeria and worked at a zoo and at a veterinary clinic. For two years during the summer, she performed in Northeastern State University's Downtown Country show in Tahlequah. She also competed in *numerous* beauty pageants at the university and was selected as Miss NSU runner-

up in 2004.

Her debut album, *Some Hearts*, was certified seven times platinum and, since February 2006, is the fastest selling debut country album in Nielsen SoundScan history. It is also the best-selling solo female debut album in country music history, since February 2008, and, since March 2011, the best-selling country album of the last 10 years. *Some Hearts* earned three No. 1 hits on the Billboard Hot Country Songs and a No. 1 hit on the Billboard Hot 100 Songs. As of March 2012, Underwood has sold more than 22 million singles and more than 14 million albums worldwide. As of May 16, 2011, Underwood became the *American Idol* US Top Earner, selling so far 12.4 million album copies and 19 million digital tracks, along with amassing \$66 million in tour revenues, since winning Season 4.

After amassing her 12th No.1 hit in June 2012, Underwood became the female country artist with the most No. 1 hits on the Billboard Hot Country Songs chart from 1991 to present, breaking her own Guinness Book record of eleven, co-held with Reba McEntire. Underwood is also the only solo country artist to have a No. 1 hit on Billboard Hot 100 Songs in the 2000 decade, as *Inside Your Heaven* reached the top of the chart in July 2005.

She's the only female artist to appear on the Top 10 of Billboard's Best Country Artists of the 2000 Decade list, ranked at No. 10.



**Carrie Underwood
at the 2010
Academy of
Country Music
Awards.
flickr.com @Keith
Hinkle**