

star chat



My lessons from life...

Supremes star, Mary Wilson, 71, who's set to appear in the Legends Live UK tour, chats about life and being an original Dreamgirl

✦ Always do what you love

Singing was my first love and I love it now just as much as I did when I started out singing with The Primettes aged 15. Looking back over 55 years or so of singing, it's been a great journey and I've had so much fun. I really believe that if you can find the one passion that makes you truly happy, you must pursue that.

✦ Family is everything

The thing I'm most proud of is having children while also having a career. When The Supremes were getting bigger and bigger I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to manage it, even though I wanted to fall in love and have children. But thank God I got to have both in a big way. It was a juggling act but I'm so happy about it. Nowadays, my children are grown-up but I love being a grandmother. Animals have always been a big part of my family life too and I've had every kind of dog you can imagine.

✦ Stay close to home

Because my career started so young, people assume I had to grow up fast. But that didn't really happen. All of us in the Supremes



Left: The Supremes with Ron Ely in Tarzan in 1968 and above Mary, front left, with Florence Ballard and Diana Ross in 1966

were fortunate to have families that kept us grounded and made sure we went to school and did our homework. Even when we became really famous, we always stayed close to family life.

✦ I'd love to be in a movie

From being a little girl, acting has always been an interest and in 1968 The Supremes guest-starred in Tarzan (above)! I've done some off-Broadway shows, but I've never been able to fully pursue it because I was always on the road. However, this year I decided I to devote my time to it. I've now got an agent and I'm hoping to do more shows as well as television and movies. It'll always be an extra to my singing, though, as I won't be giving up my musical career anytime soon.

✦ London is a great place

Touring the world is my 9-to-5, but the UK is one of my favourite places to perform. For the Legends Live tour, we'll be stopping in London, which is my favourite city—apart from maybe New York. I'm so looking forward to singing

with artists whose music is so legendary, too.

✦ Find friends with good hearts

The older I get, the more important it is to have the right kind of friends around. I have a lot of great female friends and we all just like being together, enjoying life and feeling free to be ourselves.

✦ The Legends Live Tour, also starring Dionne Warwick, Roberta Flack and The Drifters is touring October 3-6. Visit legendslive.org
✦ Mary was talking to Katharine Wootton

WHAT MADE YOU WHO YOU ARE TODAY?

Motown, and especially Berry Gordy, did a lot for me. They believed in us even though we were the ones who made them sign us. They soon realised we were forces to be reckoned with but they stuck with us and allowed us to grow. The Shirelles were also a big inspiration growing up.

PICS: GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY