



TIMELINE

DECEMBER 31, 1948: Donna Adrian Gaines is born in Boston.

1959: The future superstar. At 10 years old, she sings in public for the first time, when she steps in for a no-show singer at her church. She wows the congregation, and later she describes this moment as the start of her singing career.

1967: Opportunity knocks. Still a teenager, Donna moves to Germany to perform in the musical *Hair*. While she's there, she also makes her first records.

1974: What's in a name? Donna marries Austrian actor Helmut Sommer, and they have a daughter, Mimi. Even after they divorce, Donna keeps his last name, changing the spelling to "Summer."

1974: Legends meet. Donna signs a recording contract with producer-songwriters Giorgio Moroder and Pete Bellotte.

1975: The team makes good. After releasing a string of hits in Europe, Donna, Giorgio, and Pete write "Love to Love You Baby," which is their first American smash. Many of Donna's chart-toppers are created with Pete and Giorgio, and they quickly become synonymous with the music of the 70s.

1977: Love is in the air. Donna meets Bruce Sudano, whose band Brooklyn Dreams joins her on the hit "Heaven Knows." Donna and Bruce feel a connection, and they marry in 1980. They have two children: Brooklyn, born in 1981, and Amanda, born in 1982.

1977: It's a brand-new sound. Donna releases the single "I Feel Love," a massive hit that is credited for inventing electronic dance music. (Yes. That's right. The entire genre started here.)

1978: A new collaborator. Donna records "Last Dance," written by superstar songwriter Paula Jabora. It wins the Academy Award, and a few years later, Paul co-writes Donna's smash hit "No More Tears (Enough Is Enough)".

1975-1982: Dance is just one flavor. Though she's known as a queen of the dance floor, Donna masters multiple styles. Her hits cover rock ("Hot Stuff"), pop ("MacArthur Park"), new wave ("The Wanderer"), funk ("Love is in Control"), R&B ("Heaven Knows"), and almost everything in between.

1979: What did you call her? Many of Donna's songs are inspired by people she knew. "Bad Girls," her longest-running number-one hit, is created after one of Donna's assistants is harassed by a police officer

who mistakes her for a street walker. Donna co-writes the song with Bruce and his Brooklyn Dreams bandmates, transforming that crude moment into a rebellious anthem.

1983: Inspiration strikes. As you'll learn in the musical, Donna's surprising encounter with Los Angeles restaurant attendant Onetta Johnson leads to the creation of "She Works Hard for the Money," one of her signature songs. Onetta even appears on the back of the *She Works Hard for the Money* album.

1989: A new art form. After years of writing songs and designing her own costumes, Donna pushes herself further when she begins exhibiting her paintings at galleries around the country. She soon gains a reputation as a notable visual artist.

1980-2012: Home life. Because she doesn't want her family to live under the shadow of her stardom, Donna puts all her awards in a box that she keeps in the barn on her California ranch.

1980 – 2012: Keep the faith. Donna prays every night, no matter what. Bruce remembers that sometimes, as they were talking before going to sleep, she would forget if she'd prayed. She'd get out of bed and talk to God for a moment, just to be sure.