

BOB HOPE

# Fame, Family & FORGIVENESS

A CAREER IN SHOWBIZ GAVE HIM JOY, BUT THE HOLLYWOOD LEGEND WAS ALWAYS HAPPIEST AT HOME

It was “love at first song,” said Bob Hope of the moment he first spotted Dolores Reade singing “Paper Moon” in a New York supper club. And as in all classic meet-cute stories, Dolores felt the same spark. “It really was instant love between us,” she said. “I told my mother, ‘I think I met my husband.’” The couple wed a few months later and teamed up to perform in Bob’s vaudeville act.

Celebrity romances typically lack staying power. Not so for Bob and Dolores. Their marriage lasted 69 years. “They were best friends,” explains Richard Zoglin, author of *Hope: Entertainer of the Century*. “Dolores was Bob’s support. She organized his social life, acted as his adviser and kept him ground-

ed.” She also helped punch up his jokes. “Dad would rehearse his new material with us,” recalls Linda Hope, their eldest daughter. “My mom would give him feedback on what worked and what didn’t.”

## AN IMPERFECT UNION

Throughout their long marriage, the Hopes raised four children, donated millions to charity, enjoyed golf and entertained the troops. But being wed to a megastar had its drawbacks. Bob’s fame and busy career often kept him away from home, and he wasn’t always faithful. “In that day and age, it was sort of accepted that the guy would

play around, and he did,” observes Zoglin. “But I don’t think he felt as close to any other woman as he did to Dolores.”

Linda, though she wishes her father had been around more, remembers him fondly. “Dad’s return at Christmas was a great occasion. We missed him, and the house was always so festive,” she says. “Dad would entertain us by adopting a falsetto voice and pretending to be a little neighbor girl named Bessie. It still makes me smile thinking about it.”

“A laugh can transform unbearable tears into something bearable.”

—Bob Hope

## HOPE & HUMOR

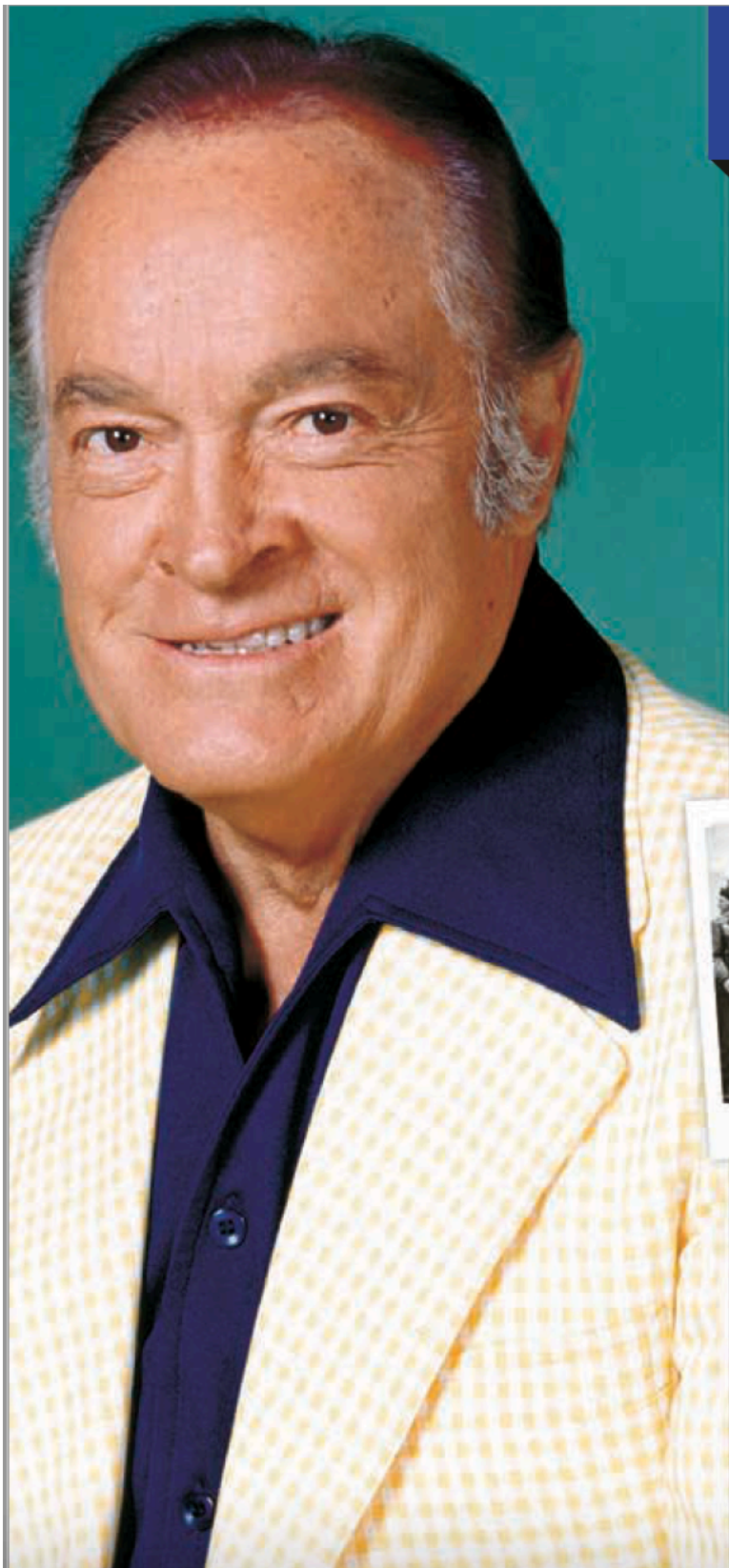
Bob’s humor and hijinks seemed to help make up for his lengthy absences. “He liked to make us laugh,” says Linda. “When my mother tried to teach us proper table manners, a napkin would come zinging across the table, launched from Dad’s chair. She spent half her

life trying to keep all of her children, including Dad, in line.”

As for Bob, he knew he was a lucky man. In his 1954 autobiography, *This Is on Me*, he wrote, “Dolores has a wise and loving touch with our children. I’m lost in admiration of the job she has done with them. It may surprise those who read this to hear that I’m a strong family man...I’m no angel. For that matter, I’ve known very few. My mother and Dolores are two. But I’m still married to the same girl I married 20 years ago, and that’s four or five under par for the Hollywood course.”

—Hilary Hattenbach





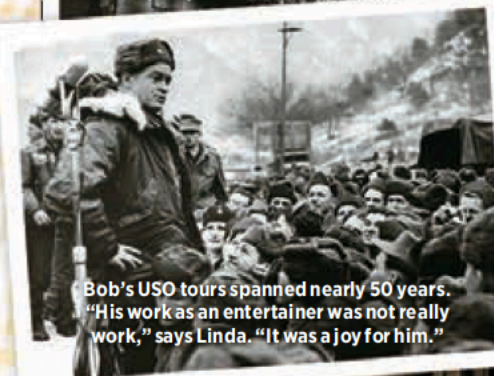
## A LIFETIME OF LOVE



"We picked Erie, Pa., for our wedding," said Bob, who tied the knot with Dolores on Feb. 19, 1934. "I can't remember why. I was in a thick, pink fog anyway."



Bob and Dolores adopted four children: Tony, Kelly, Nora and Linda. "He liked to be playful with us and have fun," says Linda.



Bob's USO tours spanned nearly 50 years. "His work as an entertainer was not really work," says Linda. "It was a joy for him."

"In 1950, my parents established the Bob and Dolores Hope Foundation," says Linda. "We fund different [charitable] programs... with a special emphasis on veterans."

