

Made you Look



Who do you look like?

by



“I view the work I do as an impersonator as a job.
I put a lot of time and effort into this job, because it is
creative and challenging, and it has provided
me with a good source of income.

I have never had an identity
crisis because I do Cher.

I am very clear
on the fact that I
am not Cher,
and very happy
to be who I am.”

Do You Believe

Sandra Wood as Cher

I didn't always resemble Cher. In fact, I never even thought about having a resemblance to Cher, or anyone else for that matter. It was other people who brought it to my attention.

I had a pretty normal childhood, growing up in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, which is a nice quiet suburb of Los Angeles, California. Actually, it was a pretty conservative upbringing. I always worked hard in school, and in all my other activities such as Girl Scouts, competitive swimming, and the school orchestra. I was always athletic, and loved riding my bicycle, spinning around the gymnastic bars, playing handball, volleyball and tetherball. I was also involved with dance in high school, and then in college. I even choreographed and performed in dance pieces for the senior concert, in both high school and college. Imagine that!

I graduated from Scripps College in Claremont, California, with a degree in History and Political Philosophy. A college degree from a private women's college, more conservative upbringing. After college, I took some odd jobs in public accounting firms, trying to find out what it was that I wanted to do with my life. Well, I found out it wasn't accounting!

About this time my father died unexpectedly. He was only 68. His death, and my lack of direction at the time, subsequently landed me in Las Vegas. I lost my father and had no prospects for the future — I was depressed. It apparently was the right combination to light the fire under me to take the biggest risk I had ever taken in my life. I auditioned as a dancer for a major Las Vegas stage production. Believe me, this was scary stuff. But sometimes risks like this are worth taking. Subsequently, I performed in Donn Arden's "Jubilee" at the MGM Grand Hotel for six years, as a dancer and showgirl. It was an amazing experience. I was part of the original cast, which meant that all our costumes were custom-made and never worn before. It was really an exciting time.

Though, of course, I couldn't just be a dancer in the show. No, I had to get my Nevada real estate license. After receiving my broker/salesperson's license, I spent my day off from the show working for a homebuilder, showing their model homes. But doing this only one day a week is not really conducive to selling homes. I enjoyed it at first, but it wasn't really my cup of tea. After six years in three-inch heels, six nights a week, my feet hurt. I retired from "hoofing" at the end of my sixth contract with the MGM, and moved back to Los Angeles.

About fifteen pounds lighter from kicking my heels up for six years, I began to hear from waitresses and store clerks, "You know, you kind of remind me of Cher". Well, what was that all about? I had never heard that before. As I began to hear this more and more, I started collecting photos of Cher. Somehow one day I ended up in a celebrity LOOK-ALIKE agent's office, in costume, of course.





I filled out the mandatory application and it was something like, "Don't call us, we'll call you." My first job through this agency was to crash the Academy Awards ceremony. But of course, I was never told this. Needless to say, I haven't worked for this agent since that job. It was a "feet first" entry into the world of impersonation.

While I was getting my impersonation career going, I continued to work in the "real" world. For a time, I worked as a contractor doing secretarial jobs. I would do short-term

assignments at dozens of companies in the San Gabriel Valley. Some of my assignments were at one of the laboratories for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Eventually, I landed on a project, where I have been for the past seven years, working in administrative and technical support. You see, there's that conservative part of me again.

It sometimes seems so strange that I should be a Cher impersonator. I mean, I never ever had any notions of such a prospect. I didn't even know that such a profession even existed. But I am glad I found out, because I have met some very talented people in this business, and made some great friends.

As a professional impersonator, I have carefully studied Cher's speaking and singing voice and mannerisms to try and re-create the illusion of this mega star, to the best of my ability. If people think, even for a moment, that the real Cher is up on stage, or has just walked into the room, then I feel I have done a good job.

I have made selective appearances and performances at corporate events across the United States for companies such as Xerox, Arco, Panasonic, IBM and General Mills. I have performed in shows at such major resorts as The Mirage, MGM Grand, Bally's and New York, New York in Las Vegas; the Tropicana Casino and Resort in Atlantic City; the Flamingo Hilton in Laughlin, Nevada; Universal Studios, 20th Century Fox and The Hop in California. In 1996, I was selected to be Cher's double in the music video "Walking in Memphis". I remember what a scary feeling it was to see Cher in person for the first time on the set. It was a bit of a humbling experience. She was very nice though and allowed a picture to be taken of us together. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would be a Cher impersonator, let alone meeting the celebrity in person. Life is full of surprises.