

A Note to Our Readers

Current Biography, which is published every other month, presents articles on people who are prominent in the news—in popular culture, sports, science and technology, national and international affairs, business, and the visual and performing arts. The profiles in this periodical are objective rather than authorized, and the sources of information are newspapers, magazines, books, the Internet and, in some cases, the biographees themselves. Each subject's preferred or professional name form is given in the heading of the article, with the full name supplied in the article itself. The heading of each profile includes the pronunciation of the name if it is unusual, date of birth if it is obtainable, and occupation. The article is supplemented by a list of selected references.

At the end of the year, all profiles published in the monthly issues will be cumulated alphabetically and printed in a single volume, *Current Biography Yearbook 2026*.

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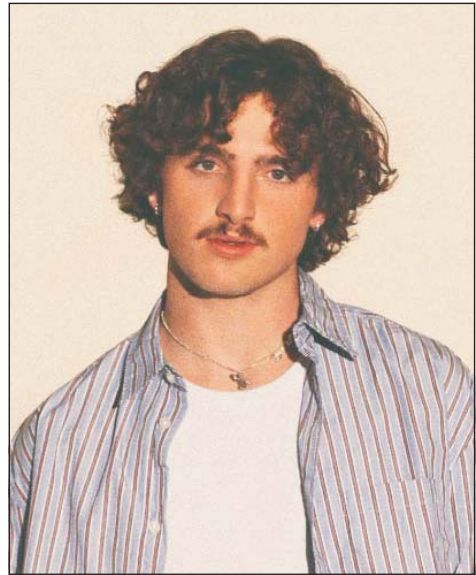
Benson Boone

Born: June 25, 2002

Occupation: Singer

In a matter of four years, Benson Boone went from discovering that he could sing to becoming one of the biggest pop stars in the world. The young performer's career began in 2020 with him posting videos of himself singing on the social media platform TikTok, which led to an invitation to audition for *American Idol* in 2021. After earning a spot as a contestant, he reconsidered and opted out of the show. In 2022, he released his first single "Ghost Town," which gained enough popularity that it landed him spots on *Late Night with Seth Meyers* and *The Kelly Clarkson Show*.

Boone continued to release music over the next two years with some success. However, it was his single "Beautiful Things," released in January 2024, that would change his life forever. Its sales certified by the Recording Industry Association of America, achieved "8× Platinum" (eight million), and earned more than two billion streams in 2024 alone. Many of Boone's other singles also soared as did his debut album *Fireworks & Rollerblades* (2024), proving that the artist's unique heartfelt sound was resonating with audiences. Boone won a 2024 MTV Video Music Award for Best Alternative Video and was nominated for a Best New



Benson Boone in 2024. Photo by Warner Records, via Wikimedia Commons.

EJAE (Kim Eun-jae)

Born: December 6, 1991

Occupation: Musician and songwriter

Kim Eun-jae, known professionally as EJAE, is having a truly golden moment. She dreamed of being a professional singer since childhood and even trained for over ten years before shifting to a background position as a songwriter. In 2017, she wrote the hit song “Psycho” for the group Red Velvet, as well as other songs for K-pop groups like Twice and Le Sserafim. In 2020, Kim was approached to collaborate on the music for an upcoming animated film titled *KPop Demon Hunters*. She would co-write several songs for the movie including “Golden,” “How It’s Done,” and “Your Idol.” In addition to songwriting, Kim performed song demos for the soundtrack that greatly contributed to the film getting a green light. Kim was also asked to stay on the production as the singing voice for the main character, Rumi. *KPop Demon Hunters* was released in June 2025, and the film as well as its soundtrack were an immediate hit. In October 2025, Kim was invited to perform live for the first time alongside her fellow singers, Audrey Nuna and Rei Ami, on *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*. That same month, Kim was also named as one of the three 2025 ASCAP Women Behind the Music Honorees. She spoke to Laura Sirikul in an interview with *Forbes* (24 Oct. 2025), about what being a genuine artist means to her, “I feel what an



Kim Eun-Jae promoting KPop Demon Hunters in Los Angeles on September 30, 2025. Photo by DominicJones, via Wikimedia Commons.

sensibility and the experiences that shaped it. At the very least, the kind of interviews I do offers me, and the show's listeners, an opportunity to learn more about someone whose work has moved and delighted us and perhaps, in some small way, altered our perceptions of ourselves and the world." (p. 14) Gross readily admits that she violates many rules of polite conversation, even when she is trying to be respectful. Sometimes she will have to interrupt an over-talker so they can accommodate the format. Other times she has to ask questions that would otherwise be too intrusive or rude coming from newly acquainted people. But that is the nature of her task. Gross encourages her guests to let her know if she's getting too personal and to take advantage of the fact that the show will be edited. She is not searching for a "gotcha!" moment in her interviews (as much as Bill O'Reilly says otherwise) and is driven by her inquisitive nature as well as her impulse to explore what provokes her. When the guests allow Gross to guide the conversation, some truly phenomenal stories are produced. Burton uses the example of when Gross interviewed Wes Craven, who had at the time of the interview, recently released *The Last House on the Left*. Gross was interested in the treatment of violence in this movie and invited Craven to explain his motivations. Although hesitant at first, Craven talked through his desire to explore his sense that America had become immune to violence and that his motivations to explore sadism stem from a childhood story about a bow and arrow and a dead rat.



Terry Gross, about to be awarded the National Humanities Medal by President Obama at the White House. Screen capture of a video marked "public domain" by the White House, via Wikimedia Commons.

mind, but I just went out there and tried to play as hard as I could each and every day,” he said about his Rookie of the Year recognition, as quoted by Rill. “I felt like I had a good shot if I just went out there and did that.” Henderson was also the recipient of an AL Silver Slugger award.

Major-League All-Star

Following the Orioles’ early elimination from the 2023 postseason, Henderson went into the 2024 MLB season hoping to build on the team’s momentum from the previous year and channel their frustration with that disappointing result. “Definitely leaned on some of the bad experiences we had last year in the postseason,” he later told Mark Inabinett for *AL* (30 Sept. 2024). “Kind of used it to fuel us this year and give us the kick that we need to push through and, hopefully, make a good run this year.” Henderson played in 159 games over the course of the season and scored 118 runs, the fourth-most in the American League, in 630 at-bats. He also ranked sixth in the American League in both hits, with 177, and home runs, with 37. His batting average of .281 was an MLB career high. Henderson’s impressive performance earned him AL Player of the Month honors in April 2024 and Player of the Week recognition in September of that year. He was also selected as a member of the AL starting roster for the 2024 All-Star Game,



Henderson at bat in 2023. Photo by Joe Andrucyk, via Wikimedia Commons.

A Lawyer and Politician

In 1982, Lee's fortunes started to turn when he gained admission into Chung-Ang University in Seoul, where he studied law on a full scholarship. He took the bar examination in 1986 and achieved a passing score. For almost two decades that would follow, he focused his law practice in the areas of human rights and labor policy. Drawing on his own experience, he advocated for the rights of the underdogs such as those being evicted from their apartments because the apartments were being redeveloped or people injured at an industrial job.



President Lee leaves for Japan, Seoul Air Base, on a key diplomatic trip for high-stakes summits with Donald Trump and Shigeru Ishiba. Photo by Lee Jeongwoo, via Wikimedia.

It was also during his time as a lawyer that he traveled more frequently, something that would push him to broaden his perspectives. Lee told *The Economist* (30 Jan. 2025) about dealing with his preconceptions: “I used to think that Japan was a country full of very strange people who invaded South Korea, committed horrific human-rights violations, and yet never properly apologized for it.” However, after visiting the nearby country, “I was shocked by Japanese people’s diligence, sincerity, and courtesy.”

But soon Lee became disillusioned with the legal system and decided to shift his professional career toward an area that could influence policymaking, have more impact, and better the lives of South Koreans. In 2005, Lee joined the Uri Party—the ruling social-liberal political party at the time—and in 2006, he took his first steps into the political arena by running unsuccessfully for mayor of Seongnam. Two years later, his attempt to win a parliamentary seat in the city also failed.

However, his time to occupy a political office would come in 2010 when, in his second attempt at running for mayor of Seongnam, the people elected him and then reelected him in 2014 as the candidate of the Democratic Party, the liberal faction of South Korea. During these two terms, he introduced what would become known as his pragmatic signature style, enacting bold reforms that would garner attention from the entire country. Among those changes

Matthew McConaughey

Born: November 4, 1969

Occupation: Actor

From rom-com heartthrob to academy award winning actor to bestselling author, Matthew McConaughey has lived many lives. With humble beginnings in small town Texas the actor, author, activist, and professor of practice has stacked up quite the resume over the last three decades. First entering the big screen with a small, but memorable role in the cult comedy classic *Dazed and Confused*, the actor has moved up the ranks making a name for himself with commended performances in critically acclaimed projects from *The Dallas Buyers Club* to *True Detective*.

Early Life and Education

Matthew David McConaughey was born on November 4, 1969, in Uvalde, Texas. His father, James, was a successful gas station owner and oil-pipe supply entrepreneur; and his mother, Mary, was a kindergarten teacher. Despite his picturesque, small town methodist upbringing, McConaughey's childhood was tumultuous at times. His parents fought a lot and divorced twice. After marrying a third time, the pair remained a couple until James's passing in 1992.



Matthew McConaughey attending the Goldene Kamera Awards in Berlin, Germany in 2014. Photo by Avda, via Wikimedia Commons.



McLaughlin competing at the 400m hurdles semi-finals at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo on August 2, 2021. Photo by Bob Ramsak, via Wikimedia Commons.

high school. McLaughlin then began to participate in national competitions with her eye on the 2016 Rio Olympics. She tried different length races during this period from 100-m to 600-m hurdles. She found that the 400-m hurdles were where she succeeded the most. In 2014, she received a silver medal at the 400-m hurdle race at the USA Track and Field Junior Championships. She also ran in the 400-m hurdle race at the 2015 World Youth Championships, where she received a gold medal for first place. In 2016, she competed in the 400-m hurdle race at the USA Track and Field Junior Championships, this time receiving a gold medal. In July 2016, McLaughlin was announced as the Gatorade National Female Athlete of the Year. Because of her record she was eligible to compete in the 2016 US Olympic Trials, where she would come in third for the 400-m hurdles, setting a new record for junior racers at 54.15 seconds. This placement brought her into the US team for the 2016 Rio Summer Olympics. At sixteen years old, she was the youngest member of the US track team since 1980. She participated in the 400-m hurdle race and came in sixteenth place with scoring.

In May 2017, she graduated from Union Catholic Regional high school. In July 2017, McLaughlin was once again announced as the Gatorade National Female Athlete of the Year. She became the first athlete to achieve this award twice. In recognition of this award, she was on the cover of the July 2017 issue of *Sports Illustrated*. In 2017, she was accepted into the University of Ken-

YouTube

In 2006, Nardwuar uploaded his first YouTube video, it was the interview with Dan Quayle from 1995. YouTube and the Internet spread the knowledge of him greatly beyond Canada. Many viewers around the world were appreciating this strange man who asks odd questions and brings his interviewees gifts. By 2025, he would have over three million subscribers on YouTube. In 2008, Nardwuar would have the first of several interviews with musical artist Pharrell who would refer to Nardwuar as one of the most impressive interviewers he has ever met. His interviews with Pharrell, led to Nardwuar interviewing rapper and mogul Jay-Z in 2011. In 2011, he also interviewed the hip hop group Odd Future; this would be the first of several memorable interviews Nardwuar would have with member Tyler the Creator. In December 2015, he suffered a stroke due to an undiagnosed heart issue that was corrected with surgery in early 2016.

In 2017, Nardwuar celebrated 30 years of his radio show on CiTR. In 2018, he had notable interviews with rappers Cardi B and Lil Uzi Vert. Lil Uzi would later sample a snippet of their interview in their song "Futsal Shuffle 2020" in 2019. In 2019, Nardwuar was inducted into the BC (British Columbia) Entertainment Hall of Fame. In honor of that recognition, Vancouver Mayor Kennedy Stewart declared September 29 to be "Nardwuar Day" in his hometown. In 2024, Nardwuar had several notable interviews including Reneé Rapp, Doechii, Chappell Roan, and Timothée Chalamet. In 2025, he interviewed more notable people from the world of music including Sabrina Carpenter and Lil Tecca. He also interviewed three candidates during the 2025 Canadian Federal Election: Mark Carney, Elizabeth May, and Jagmeet Singh. All three of them played Hip Flip with Nardwuar. In 2025, it was also announced that Nardwuar would be collaborating with shoe brand



Nardwuar in Vancouver in November 2010. Photo by TEDx Vancouver, via Wikimedia Commons.

Kiara Nirghin

Born: February 25, 2000

Occupation: Technologist

When South African technologist Kiara Nirghin asked, “Are we wasting our brains?” in her November 2017 TEDxPretoria Talk, she was referring to people’s tendency to think the bigger issues in life like worldwide droughts would be solved by experts. She challenged the audience to engage with problems. “If we don’t continue looking at the big issues in life, we will continue living with them. If we don’t look at solving the drought, we will continue living in drought-stricken areas.”

Nirghin had already walked the talk by creating an affordable solution farmers could use to reduce water depletion on their crops during a drought. The superabsorbent polymer made from orange peels earned her the Grand Prize in the 2016 Google Science Fair. Among the doors the award opened for her was an education at the prestigious Stanford University in California, where she studied computer science, sustainability, and climate innovation. In 2023, she cofounded Chima, a technology company based in Silicon Valley, California, that places artificial intelligence (AI) at the forefront of its strategy to build systems for enterprises. Through speaking and ambassador roles, she champions sustainability through innovation using science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. She is helping to close the brain gap in



Kiara Nirghin in January 2025. Photo by Fredrich345, via Wikimedia Commons.

Julia Quinn

Born: January 12, 1970

Occupation: American author

Julia Quinn is the pen name for American author Julie Pottinger. She is a romance author, specializing in historical romances set in Regency-era England. Quinn began her literary career while a student at Harvard University, starting her first novel in the summer before her senior year and finishing it after her graduation in 1992. Her first novel, *Splendid*, was published in 1995. After a brief stint at the Yale School of Medicine, Quinn decided to drop out of medical school to pursue being an author full-time. At that point, she had already published the rest of the *Splendid* trilogy, as well as the first book in the



Julia Quinn at the Göteborg Book Fair 2025. Photo by Johan Jönsson (Julle), via Wikimedia.

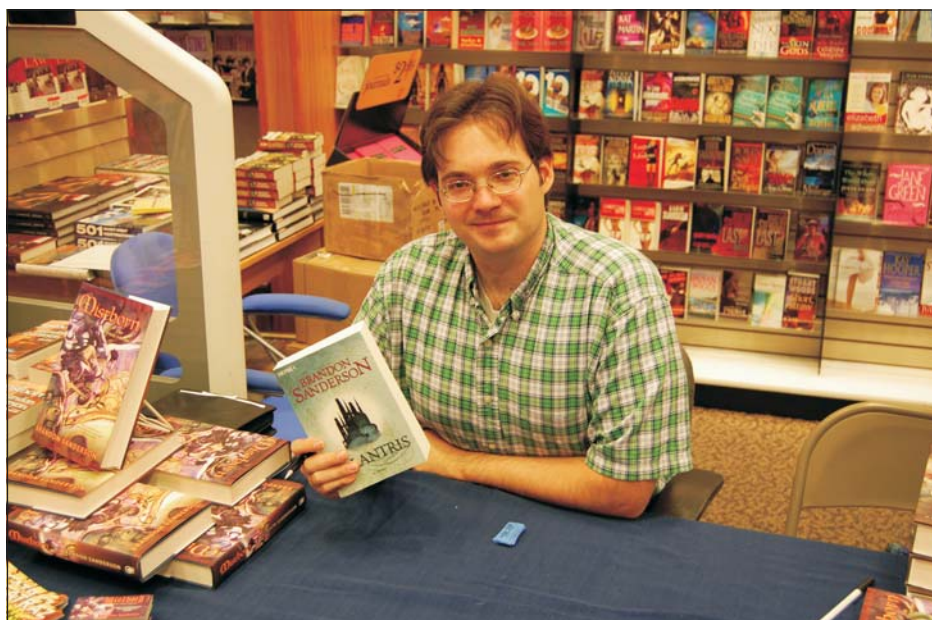


Round one game four of the Stanley Cup Playoffs. The Colorado Avalanche at Seattle Kraken on April 24, 2023. by Jenn G from Seattle, WA

six-year contract extension with the Avalanche prior to the start of the 2019–2020 season. In 2021, Rantanen aided the Avalanche in claiming the league’s Presidents’ Trophy, awarded to the team with the best record in the league.

Stanley Cup Champion

The 2021–2022 NHL season was especially meaningful for Rantanen and the Avalanche. Rantanen recorded 36 goals and 56 assists for 92 points over the course of the season, which ended with the Avalanche ranked second in the league with 56 wins and 19 losses. During the playoffs, the Avalanche initially faced the Nashville Predators, sweeping that team in a four-game series. They went on to play the St. Louis Blues, beating them four games to two, before completing another four-game sweep against the Edmonton Oilers in the Western Conference finals. That victory enabled the Avalanche to advance to



Brandon Sanderson holding a German-language copy of his fantasy novel Elantris on August 18, 2007 at the book pre-release event for Mistborn: The Well of Ascension at the Waldenbooks store in the Provo Towne Centre mall in Provo, Utah. Photo by Nihonjoe, via Wikimedia.

key aspect is to have characters that are deeply personable with issues that transcend genre. However, it is perhaps the construction of magic systems that is the most important thing for Sanderson. In a series of essays titled Sanderson's Three Laws, he outlines the rules that he generally follows within his own books. The first law, as he writes, is that "An author's ability to solve conflict is DIRECTLY PROPORTIONAL to how well the reader understands said magic." Sanderson cites that there are two schools of thought on this matter: one that says creating rules for magic inhibits the sense of wonder the fantasy genre provides and the other that says rules are necessary for enhancing magic as a plot element for a greater story. Sanderson falls firmly into the second camp and writes, "Fantasy doesn't have to be about stories where the authors simply make up whatever they need. Still, I think that it is a criticism we fantasy writers need to be aware of and wary regarding. If we simply let ourselves develop new rules every time our characters are in danger, we will end up creating fiction that is not only unfulfilling and unexciting, but just plain bad." The second law reinforces that idea and simply states that "limitations power." It is not the boundless possibilities of power that make magic interesting, but rather their limitations, their costs, their weaknesses that makes even the most basic of premises much more interesting to read. Stories, regardless