

# Paula Poundstone

## Biography

Appearing on stage with a stool, a microphone, and a can of Diet Pepsi, Paula Poundstone is delighting crowds on her hilarious national "Unauthorized Autobiography Tour." There's a wonderful synergy to each one-of-a-kind two-hour show. Poundstone improvises with a crowd like a jazz musician. She'll find an audience member who sells grass seed to golf courses in part of the state of Maryland and wonder aloud if, in such a small territory, the grass seed were any good at all, the salesman could possibly be working to his full potential, then swing in another unexpected direction without a plan, without a net. Poundstone is so quick and unassuming that audience members leave complaining that their cheeks hurt from laughter and debating whether the random people she talked to were "plants."

In addition to touring the country, Paula can be heard regularly on NPR's oddly informative weekly news quiz show, "Wait Wait Don't Tell Me." She recently appeared on, "Late Night with David Letterman" and Garrison Keillor's NPR program "A Prairie Home Companion." Her website, [HYPERLINK "http://www.paulapoundstone.com"](http://www.paulapoundstone.com) www.paulapoundstone.com features diary entries with pictures from Paula's personal life, and a special column, "Ask Paula to ask Hep Cat." Paula's cat, Hep can speak (but only to Paula) with authority on a surprisingly wide array of topics and what Hep doesn't know she's only too glad to try and find out. Paula, for example, asked Hep recently if she should use a "no stick" spray on a "no stick" pan and Hep replied, "no."

In 1992 Poundstone was the first woman to win a Cable ACE Award for Best Stand-Up Comedy Special for her HBO special "Cats, Cops, and Stuff." In 1996 she debuted her second HBO stand-up special, "Paula Poundstone Goes to Harvard," the only time the elite university has allowed their name to be used in the title of a television show. Paula was the first woman to have the rare opportunity to headline the White House Correspondents Dinner and provided memorable live coverage of the '92 political conventions and presidential inauguration for "The Tonight Show." Her quick wit and spontaneity made her a perfect fit as backstage commentator for the '93 Emmy Awards the following year. Poundstone starred in a self-titled series for HBO in '92 (for which she won her second Cable ACE Award for Best Program Interviewer) and moved the show to ABC in '93, which was short-lived, but applauded for its break from convention. She has performed in almost every Comic Relief Special since its inception, at Fords Theater for President Clinton in '94 and '95 on the prestigious "A Gala For The President" ABC-TV specials.

Paula grew up in Sudbury, Massachusetts, and began performing at open-mic nights in 1979. She has made numerous appearances on both “The Tonight Show” and “Late Night with David Letterman,” served as a celebrity regular on the syndicated game show “To Tell The Truth” in 2000 - 2001, voiced the character of Judge Stone on the acclaimed ABC-TV Saturday morning animated series “Science Court” (a.k.a. “Squigglevision”) for three years, and guest starred on the CBS series “Cybill,” which led to a recurring role during the show’s final season. Paula has also appeared on PBS favorites such as “Sesame Street” and “Storytime,” and won a local Emmy Award for her field pieces on the renowned series “Life & Times” for PBS station KCET. She has also been a frequent guest on Garrison Keillor’s NPR “Prairie Home Companion” including his annual “Joke Show.”

An accomplished writer, Paula is currently writing a book for Harmony Books, a division of Random House, which she says is taking her a long time to write “because I’m writing it in real time.” Paula had a monthly column in Mother Jones from 1993-1998 where her broad base of topics ranged from covering the basics of government with former Senator Paul Simon (while enjoying rides at an amusement park) to poignantly noting the similarities between her life and that of Koko, a gorilla who knows sign language and answering questions from her readers. Poundstone has infused her humor in feature pieces for several other publications, including Glamour, The LA Times Sunday Calendar, and Entertainment Weekly.

Paula produced the award-winning children’s audio book project titled Completely Yours, and gave voice to a character alongside Mary Tyler Moore, Bea Arthur, Kathy Najimy, Ed Asner, and Lily Tomlin. Released in 1997, the project featured a story about adoption called A Mother for Choco and is available through the Children’s Book of the Month Club and select bookstores.

While she has amassed an impressive list of accolades on stage and in print, Ms. Poundstone is a single parent with children ages 13, 10, and 6, nine cats, a big cat-eating dog, a bearded dragon lizard, an elderly bunny, and one doggedly determined ant left from her ant farm. So the majority of her life is spent in Santa Monica, California wielding a damp cloth, lint lifting, denying junky snacks, watching steadily improving cartwheels, trying desperately to remember the parts of speech, correcting long division, listening to Nancy Drew read aloud, over cooking noodles, and explaining that life isn’t always fair, but that right now it’s Thomas E’s turn to use his pogo stick.. She says things couldn’t be better.

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