Top Ten Famous Birminghamians

1. **Condoleezza Rice**, Secretary of State, “America’s face to the world” President George W. Bush.


3. **Mother Angelica**, founder of the multi million dollar Eternal Word Television Network and, according to Time Magazine, the “most influential Catholic woman in America.”


5. **Courtney Cox Arquette**, star of Friends.

6. **Emmylou Harris**, Grammy Award-winning Nashville recording star.

7. **Bart Starr**, NFL Hall of Fame quarterback

8. **Vonetta Flowers**, 2002 Olympic Gold Medalist and first black to earn a gold medal in the Winter Olympics.

9. **Bo Jackson**, Heisman Trophy Winner and two sport all-star

10. **Paul “Bear” Bryant**, Alabama’s legendary football coach

Honorable Mentions:
- **Richard North Patterson**, best selling author
- **Fannie Flagg**, comedienne, author and screenplay writer (Fried Green Tomatoes, etc.)
- **Dr. John W. Kirklin**, cardiac surgery pioneer performed the world’s first series of open-heart operations using a heart-lung machine.

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1. Birmingham’s UAB is the world’s top kidney transplant center, and with the September 2002 announcement of a $13 million grant from National Cancer Institute, UAB becomes one of the nation’s top two or three brain cancer research centers. It ranks 16th nationally in NIH funding for research, trailing only Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill in the Southeast.

2. Birmingham’s Push Design (Lloyd Cooper) developed the iTalk for Apple, which turns iPods into digital voice recorders.

3. During the past decade, the top three most significant business investments in a 17-state region from Virginia to Texas were Mercedes-Benz, Honda and Hyundai, all located in Alabama.


6. A national study conducted using the latest Bureau of Economic Analysis income figures ranked the Birmingham-Hoover Metropolitan area’s income growth rate the fastest in the entire South and seventh in the United States over a 20 year period.

7. Birmingham is listed among the 150 cheapest cities in the US.


9. Highlands Bar and Grill was ranked by Gourmet Magazine as the #5 restaurant in America. October 2001.

10. Birmingham’s Sidewalk Moving Picture Festival was named one of “ten fantastic film festival vacations” along with New Orleans, Austin and San Diego. Film Festival Today, Spring, 2003.

11. Birmingham’s Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum at Barber Motorsports Park houses 814 motorcycles, the largest collection of motorcycles in the world, many of which were recently showcased in an internationally celebrated exhibit staged by the Guggenheim Museum in New York City, Barcelona and Las Vegas.

13. Birmingham’s Masonry Arts has been chosen to do all the exterior stone work cladding on the Pentagon in Washington, following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2002.

14. The Alabama School of Fine Arts is the nation’s only state-supported school of its kind with grades 7-12. Mikail Barishnykov called the school, “...one of the top three schools in the country for teaching ballet.”

15. Birmingham’s Ruffner Mountain, with 1,000 acres and 11+ miles of hiking trails, is larger than NYC’s Central Park and is the 2nd largest urban nature preserve in the nation.

16. The Club’s multi-colored floor was director John Badham’s inspiration for a key icon in the definitive movie of the 70’s, Saturday Night Fever, starring John Travolta.

17. Birmingham’s Lakeshore Foundation is a world leader in athletics and recreation for the physically disabled, and an official Olympic and Paraolympic training site.

18. Birmingham is the only place in the world where all the ingredients for making iron are present: coal, iron ore, limestone and dolomite – all within a 10 mile radius.

19. Birmingham is a leading center for golf enthusiasts. Jack Nicklaus, Pete Dye, Robert Trent Jones, Sr., Donald Ross, Hubert Green, Bob Cupp, Tom Fazio and Jerry Pate have all designed courses located in metro Birmingham.

20. Birmingham is home to the nation’s oldest existing baseball park, Rickwood Field, which opened in August, 1910.

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**Top 10 Things to do in Birmingham**

1. Eat at Dreamland Barbecue— best ribs in the world!
2. City Stages— 3 day music festival in May
3. Regions Golf Charity Classic— a seniors tour favorite!
4. Race weekend at Talledega
5. Sloss Fright Furnace— scary haunted Halloween experience
6. Visit the McWane Center — IMAX Theatre, hands on learning and more
7. Oak Mountain State Park— hike to Peavine Falls, golf, or fish
8. Red Mountain 4th of July fireworks— the best in town!
9. Birmingham Zoo— don’t forget to ride the Choo-Choo
10. Birmingham Civil Rights Museum— interactive learning, education, and more!

*for more information see www.birminghamchamber.com/visiting/facts*
Metropolitan Birmingham ranks #15 in 2005 as one of “America’s 50 Hottest Cities”. 
Expansion Management magazine, January 2005

A national study conducted using the latest Bureau of Economic Analysis income figures ranked the Birmingham – Hoover Metropolitan Area’s income growth rate the fastest in the entire South and seventh in the United States over a 20 year period. 
Source: American City Business Journals (ACBJ), July 8, 2004

Birmingham is listed among the 150 most affordable cities in the US. Birmingham, home to six Fortune 500 companies, is given high marks for its diverse residents and housing prices that “are affordable but appreciating quickly.”
Source: Life 2.0: How People Across America are Transforming Their Lives by Finding the Where of Their Happiness, Rich Karlgaard, July, 2004

In a ranking of the top 1,000 high schools nationwide, Jefferson County International Baccalaureate School (with 325 students) was named the top public high school in the nation. Additionally, Alabama School of the Fine Arts ranked 61, and Mountain Brook High School ranked 248. 
Source: Newsweek Magazine, May 7, 2005

Ala. ranks #3 in the nation in most runners per capita. 

We’re #1! A 1,108 acre tract has been put together by the Black Warrior-Cahaba Rivers Land Trust that will result in the establishment of Red Mountain Park. With the creation of this park, Birmingham will have 17.9 acres of public green space per 1,000 residents, ahead of top ranked Minneapolis with 14.3 acres per 1,000 residents. 

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Medical Center ranked #3 in the nation (behind only Mayo Clinic and Mass. General) in overall quality of health care. 
Source: The Best in Medicine

Birmingham was rated #1 in the nation in Health by Ladies Home Journal in its issue of “The Best Cities,” April, 2002.

Birmingham is a major banking center. It is home to 3 of the Top 50 banks in the U.S. with a total of 22 banks employing more than 14,000 and combined total assets of $187 billion. 
Source: Randy Haines, Compass Bank president, at the Business Outlook Conference, January 12, 2005

Birmingham’s water quality received an “A” ranking (only 13 of 101 cities nationwide were as highly ranked and none higher; 7 cities failed including Houston, Las Vegas and Wichita) by a joint study of the Environmental Quality Institute at UNC, Rutgers University and the National Defense Institute. 

Quick Facts

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