

My Drift

Title: Mark Harmon

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Besides Jeopardy! and Wheel of Fortune and most all Sports, the two regular TV shows I like to watch are NCIS and Criminal Minds. I decided to write this article about someone from these shows and I picked Mark Harmon because I find his life to be the most interesting.

Family

Thomas Mark Harmon was born in Burbank, California on September 2, 1951, which makes him 68 years old. He was the youngest of three children. His parents were Heisman Trophy-winning football player and broadcaster Tom Harmon and actress, model, artist, and fashion designer Elyse Knox. Harmon's two older sisters are the late actress and painter Kristin Nelson, who was divorced from the late singer Rick Nelson, and actress and model Kelly Harmon, formerly married to car magnate John DeLorean.

Yes, Mark's dad was a famous football player at the University of Michigan. He played the halfback position from 1938 to 1940. He led the nation in scoring and was a consensus All-American in both 1939 and 1940 and



**Mark Harmon's Parents
Tom Harmon and wife
Elyse Knox**

won the Heisman Trophy, the Maxwell Award, and the Associated Press Athlete of the Year award in 1940.

His nickname was "Old 98" which I find somewhat unusual for a halfback! He played in the NFL for the Los Angeles Rams for a couple of seasons. He was also a military pilot and a sports broadcaster. He died at age 70 in Los Angeles.

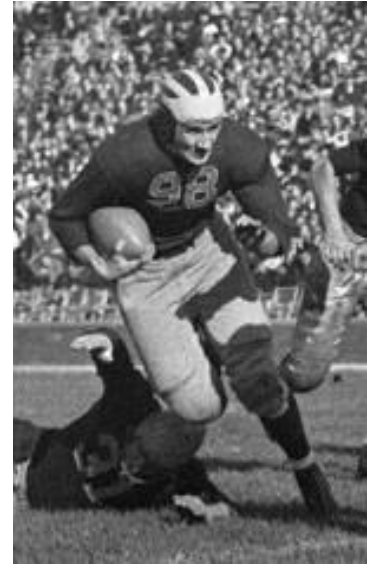
Both Tom and Mark Harmon have the same first name – Thomas. That is the primary reason Mark decided to use his middle name.

Mark's mother Elyse Knox died on February 16, 2012 in Los Angeles at age 94.

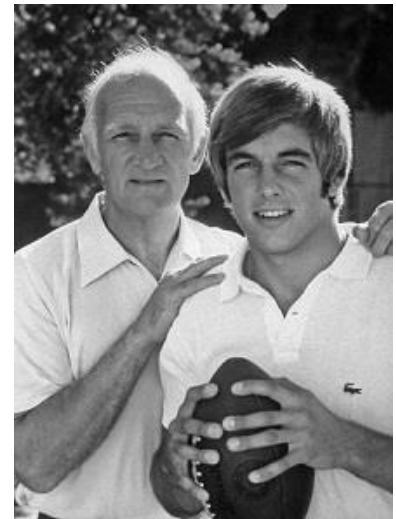
As we just learned, Mark Harmon came from a celebrity family and we will learn that he took after both his father and his mother by being a good athlete and a good movie/TV actor.

Harmon has been married to actress Pam Dawber since March 21, 1987. The couple have two sons: Sean Thomas Harmon (born April 25, 1988, who played a young Gibbs in five NCIS episodes), and Ty Christian Harmon (born June 25, 1992). They maintain a low profile and rarely appear in public with their children.

Pam Dawber is an actress best known for her lead television sitcom roles as Mindy McConnell in Mork & Mindy and Samantha Russell in My Sister Sam.



Old 98 – Tom Harmon



Father and Son



Mark Harmon and wife Pam Dawber

High School and College

Harmon went to Harvard-Westlake High School in Los Angeles. This is a private high school with two campuses. Harvard is an all-boys school and Westlake is an all-girls school.

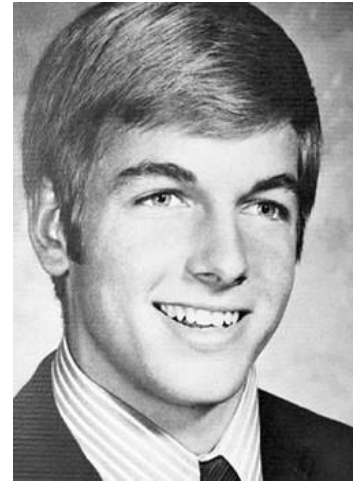
He played several sports including football, basketball, baseball, and rugby. Mark's favorite sport was baseball (he played catcher) and he had dreams of becoming a great player for the Los Angeles Dodgers.

However, Mark's best sport was football where he played quarterback. In his last game of his junior year, he suffered a broken elbow and was unable to play football in his senior year. Because of this, only a few junior colleges were interested in Harmon playing football for them. He decided to stay in the Los Angeles area and enrolled at Pierce Junior College.

Harmon's plan now was to attend junior college for two years and then transfer to a four-year university to study to become a doctor. However, he played quarterback so good at Pierce he made the All-America team in his sophomore year and was recruited by several big-name football programs including Oklahoma and UCLA. Again, Harmon elected to stay home and picked UCLA.

Take a kid who looks like he ought to be in a beach-party movie, give him a legendary football name and then throw him up against the #1 team in the country. What have you got? You've got yourself an unbelievable opening to the 1972 college football season. You've got Mark Harmon, Old No. 7, handsome, trim, tan and dashing, and what he did in the creaky Los Angeles Coliseum that Saturday evening was beat big, fierce, overwhelming favorite Nebraska for little, unheralded UCLA, the basketball school.

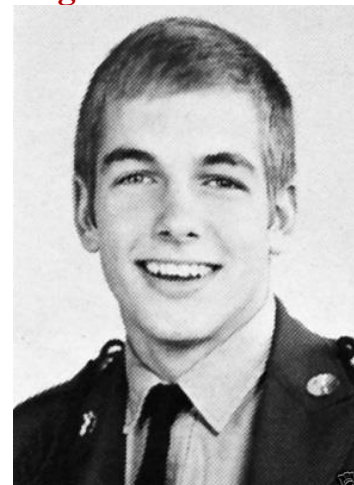
All Mark Harmon did, with a little help from his friends, was throw a pass for a touchdown, run for another and then run and throw the Bruins to a winning field goal over the Cornhuskers in about as shocking an upset as anyone



High School Yearbook



High School Football

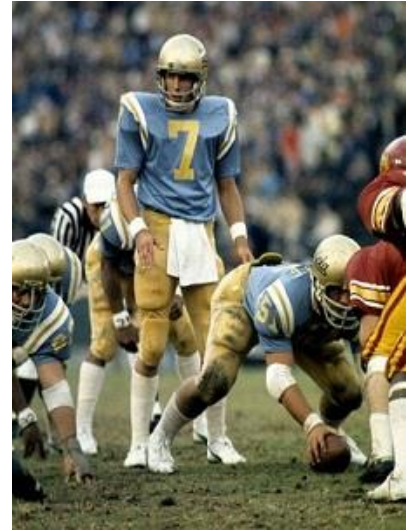


Pierce Junior College

could dream up. The final score was 20-17 and the winning points were booted with only 22 seconds to play by Efren Herrera, with Harmon holding the ball.

What made this game even more special was he did this while his dad watched from the press box where he was announcing the drama for national TV. A new star was born!

In his senior year, Harmon received the National Football Foundation Award for All-Round Excellence. During his two years as quarterback in coach Pepper Rodgers's wishbone offense, UCLA compiled a 17–5 record (.773). Harmon graduated cum laude from UCLA in 1974 with a B.A. in Communications.

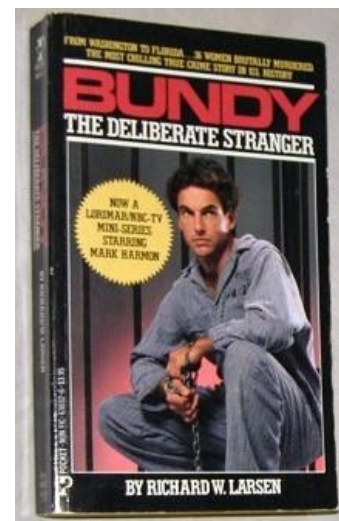


No. 7 Harmon at UCLA

Films and TV Movies

Some football experts say Harmon was good enough to play in the NFL but after graduating from UCLA, Harmon decided to follow in his mother's footsteps and become an actor.

I didn't realize that Mark Harmon has been in so many films (25 of them) and TV movies (12 of these). Maybe that is because Harmon has never been considered a great movie star. In fact, I can only remember one TV movie starring Mark Harmon that I have seen. This was a 2-part movie called "The Deliberate Stranger". Harmon starred as Ted Bundy the serial killer. I thought this was a great movie, but I have never seen it come on TV again.



The Deliberate Stranger

Here is a short recap of this movie:

Based on a true story, this film depicts the life of Theodore Robert Bundy, the serial killer. In 1974, after having murdered several young women, he leaves Seattle for Utah, where he enrolls as a law student at the University of Utah. Soon after, several girls disappear. It takes the cooperation of several police forces to work efficiently on this case. Soon, but not soon enough, the police eliminate endless possibilities and close in on him.



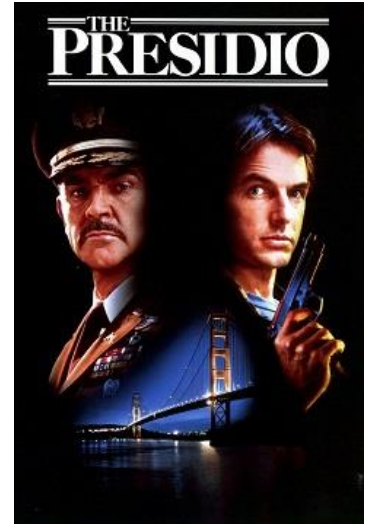
Bundy was jailed for the first time when he was incarcerated in Utah for aggravated kidnapping and attempted criminal assault. He then became a suspect in a progressively longer list of unsolved homicides in several states. Facing murder charges in Colorado, he engineered a dramatic escape from prison and made it to Florida. There, he committed assaults on several young women, including three murders, before his ultimate recapture. For the Florida homicides, he received three death sentences in two separate trials.

Bundy killed at least 36 young women and girls, mostly brunette and with long straight hair. Ted Bundy was an abductor, rapist, sadist, torturer and brutal serial killer. He was executed in the electric chair at Florida State Prison on January 24, 1989.

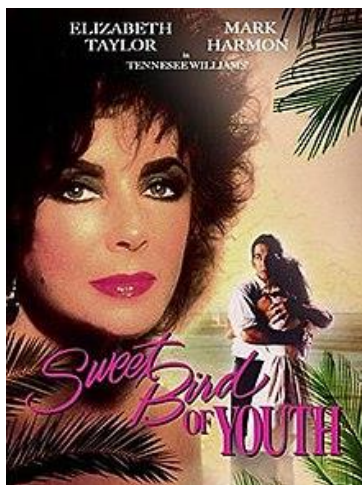
Harmon's best film acting came in "The Presidio" and "Stealing Home". Here is a short recap of each movie:

The Presidio - San Francisco detective Jay Austin (Mark Harmon) is assigned to investigate the murder of a female MP at the Presidio Army Base. Jay must interview suspect Lieutenant Colonel Caldwell (Sean Connery), his former commander from his military days.

Stealing Home – This romantic drama film starring Harmon and Jodie Foster is about a family that weathers all sorts of disasters and keeps going in spite of it all.



Harmon's Best Films



1989 – Sweet Bird of Youth



1994 – Wyatt Earp



1987 – After the Promise

TV Shows before NCIS

From 1973 to 1983, Harmon appeared (mostly bit-parts or one-time appearances) in about 20 TV shows. Here are some of the more prominent ones:

Mark Harmon made his first TV appearance in **“Ozzie's Girls”** which was a spin-off of “The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet”. Show was written by Ozzie Nelson and directed by David Nelson. Show aired as a weekly series during the 1973-74 season.



Ozzie's Girls

“Sam” was a crime drama TV series that aired on the CBS from March 14 to April 18, 1978 for six episodes. It told the story of a Los Angeles police officer, Mike Breen (played by Mark Harmon), and his specially trained police dog, Sam, a Labrador Retriever.



Sam

“240-Robert” chronicles the missions of a specialized unit of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), that utilized four-wheel drive vehicles and a helicopter. Most of the assignments were sea/air/land search and rescue operations in the extensive (over 4,000 square mile) jurisdiction. The show aired in 1979 and 1980 for 16 episodes. It starred:

Deputy Theodore Applegate III (John Bennett Perry)

Deputy Dwayne "Thib" Thibideaux (Mark Harmon)

Deputy Morgan Wainwright (Joanna Cassidy)

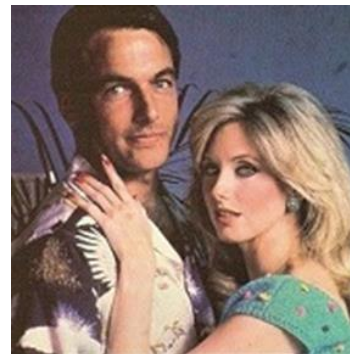


240-Robert

“Flamingo Road” was a prime-time television soap opera that aired on NBC. It was first seen as a TV movie on May 12, 1980, and as a series on January 6, 1981, after a rebroadcast of the pilot on December 30, 1980. The show was based on a 1942 Robert Wilder novel of the same name and the 1949 movie scripted by Wilder and starring Joan Crawford.

Flamingo Road was created to compete against CBS's Dallas and Knots Landing, nighttime dramas that were inspired by the daily afternoon soap operas that had been a staple of TV for years.

Harmon starred with Morgan Fairchild on the show for 37 episodes during the 1981 and 1982 seasons.



Flamingo Road

In 1983, Harmon finally hit the big time when he starred as Dr. Robert Caldwell in St. Elsewhere. Remember when Mark Harmon was in school at Pierce Junior College where he wanted to study to become a doctor? Well, he finally became a doctor!

“St. Elsewhere” was a medical drama TV series that had a six-season, 137-episode run on NBC from October 26, 1982, to May 25, 1988. The series stars Ed Flanders, Norman Lloyd and William Daniels as teaching doctors at an aging, rundown Boston hospital who give interns a promising future in making critical medical and life decisions. Recognized for its gritty, realistic drama, St. Elsewhere gained a small yet loyal following (the series never ranked higher than 47th place in the yearly Nielsen ratings). Harmon was on the show from 1983 to 1986 for 70 episodes.

The hospital's nickname, "St. Elsewhere", is a slang term used in the medical field to refer to lesser-equipped hospitals that serve patients turned away by more prestigious institutions; it is also used in medical academia to refer to teaching hospitals in general. St. Elsewhere was set at the fictional St. Eligius Hospital, a decaying urban teaching hospital in Boston's South End neighborhood.

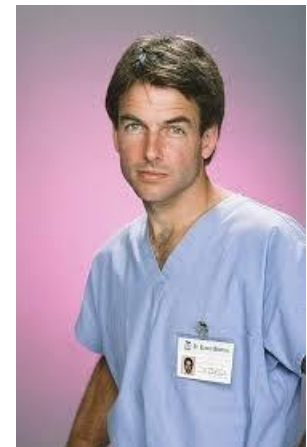
Mark Harmon, Sexiest Man Alive, 1986

Yes, the second-ever "Sexiest Man Alive" was a St. Elsewhere cast member. Mark Harmon, Sexiest Man Alive, 1986. Here's part of the article from the January 27, 1986 issue of People magazine:

St. Elsewhere's Mark Harmon, who had just wrapped his run as plastic surgeon and resident eye candy, Dr. Bobby Caldwell, is this year's Sexiest Man Alive. The title of "Sexiest Man Alive" had been initiated the year before, as the tag line of a Mel Gibson cover, and since then, the feature has become an annual tradition. Harry Hamlin from L.A. Law would "win" the following year, and after selecting John F. Kennedy, Jr. in 1988, the honor has strictly been bestowed on Hollywood film stars.



St. Elsewhere Cast



Mark Harmon as Dr. Robert Caldwell



The Sexiest Man Alive

Harmon's next TV show was called **"Reasonable Doubts"** that ran from 1991 to 1993 for 45 episodes. This show was primarily about the working relationship between Assistant District Attorney Tess Kaufman, a prosecutor very sensitive to the rights of the accused, and hard-charging, gruff Detective Dicky Cobb (Mark Harmon), an old-fashioned cop with a "bust-the-perps" attitude. The reason that these two had been assigned to work together was that Cobb knew sign language, and Tess, like the actress who portrayed her, was deaf. Dicky was usually more frustrated by Tess' attitudes than by her deafness.



Reasonable Doubts



Chicago Hope

Chicago Hope starred Mandy Patinkin as Dr. Jeffrey Geiger, a hot-shot surgeon with emotional issues stemming from the psychiatric condition of his wife who drowned their infant son. Thomas Gibson played Dr. Daniel Nyland, a promiscuous ER doctor and trauma surgeon who was later suspended due to his having an affair with a patient's family member. Dr. Keith Wilkes played by Rocky Carroll, often clashed with Nyland and was known for his back-to-basics and rough demeanor. Mark Harmon played Dr. Jack McNeil, an Orthopedic Surgeon. He was on the show from 1996 to 2000 for 95 episodes.

Did you notice something a little strange about the cast of **Chicago Hope**? Thomas Gibson and Mandy Patinkin went on to star in **Criminal Minds** and Mark Harmon and Rocky Carroll went on to star in **NCIS**. Harmon's character of **NCIS** special agent Leroy Jethro Gibbs was first introduced in a guest starring role in two episodes of **JAG**. Since 2003, Harmon has starred in **NCIS** as the same character.

NCIS

I wonder if Mark Harmon ever dreamed of being in the Marines?



Gunnery Sergeant Leroy Jethro Gibbs was a Marine Sniper and a Military Policeman



Leroy Jethro Gibbs is a fictional character of the CBS TV series NCIS, portrayed by Mark Harmon. He is a former U.S. Marine Corps Scout Sniper turned special agent who commands a team for the Naval Criminal Investigative Service. Gibbs is the most accomplished marksman on the team and the most skilled at handling violent standoffs; he depends on his other agents heavily for technical forensics and background checks. He is patient but firm with his team and has little patience for bureaucracy.

Premise. NCIS follows a fictional team of Naval Criminal Investigative Service Major Case Response Team (MCRT) special agents based at the Washington, D.C. field office in Washington Navy Yard. In real life, NCIS is the primary law enforcement and counterintelligence arm of the United States Department of the Navy, which includes the United States Marine Corps. NCIS investigates all major criminal offenses (felonies)—for example, crimes punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice by confinement of more than one year—within the Department of the Navy.

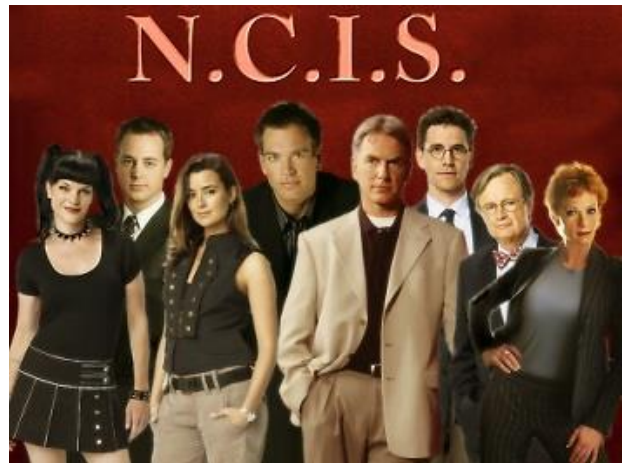
Plot. Whenever a crime is committed involving Navy or Marine personnel, this elite arm of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service — spearheads the investigation. The team, led by laconic investigator Leroy Jethro Gibbs and his team of special agents along with Medical Examiners, forensic specialists, and operational psychologists. There is also a NCIS Director who attempts to control the actions of Gibbs and his team.

Here is the cast of NCIS:



Season 1 Cast (from left)

Sasha Alexander as Caitlin Todd
David McCallum as Dr. Donald Mallard
Mark Harmon as Leroy Jethro Gibbs
Pauley Perrette as Abigail Sciuto
Michael Weatherly as Anthony DiNozzo



Season 4 Cast (new cast members)

Sean Murray as Timothy McGee
Cote de Pablo as Ziva David
Brian Dietzen as Dr. Jimmy Palmer
Lauren Holly as Jenny Shepard



Current Season 17 Cast

Rocky Carroll as Leon Vance, NCIS Director
Brian Dietzen as Dr. Jimmy Palmer, Chief Medical Examiner for NCIS
Maria Bello as Dr. Jacqueline "Jack" Sloane, NCIS Operational Psychologist
Mark Harmon as Leroy Jethro Gibbs, NCIS Supervisory Special Agent (SSA)
Diona Reasonover as Kasie Hines, Forensic Scientist for NCIS
Wilmer Valderrama as Nicholas "Nick" Torres, NCIS Special Agent
Emily Wickersham as Eleanor "Ellie" Bishop, NCIS Junior Field Agent
Sean Murray as Timothy McGee, NCIS Senior Field Agent
David McCallum as Dr. Donald Mallard, NCIS Historian

Hobbies

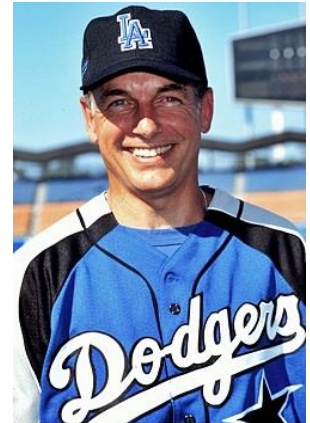
Harmon worked as a carpenter before making a success of his acting career. On NCIS, his carpentry skills are alluded to through his character's hobby of building boats in his basement. In real life, Harmon has a workshop where he builds things including boats. Mark Harmon is a family man and enjoys horseback riding, barbeques, playing with his dogs, and other family activities.



One last thing – remember when Mark Harmon was young, he wanted to play baseball for the Los Angeles Dodgers?

Well, Harmon is a BIG dodger fan and sponsors the Annual Mark Harmon Celebrity Dodger Baseball Weekend! Harmon plays in the game every year along with former players and other celebrities. Proceeds from the event benefits Ronald McDonald House Charities and The Anna's House Foundation.

Mark Harmon does lead an interesting life and appears to be a down-to-earth good guy in real life.



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