PEOPLE DEBUTS 50TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE FEATURING 11 COVER STARS

Cover Stars include: Jennifer Aniston, Drew Barrymore, Viola Davis, Michael J. Fox, Dwayne Johnson, Nicole Kidman, John Legend, Matthew McConaghey, Serena Williams, Oprah Winfrey and Reese Witherspoon

PLUS The Next Power Players, How PEOPLE Changed My Life and More!

NEW YORK, April 10, 2024 /**PRNewswire**/ -- PEOPLE is celebrating its 50th anniversary, marking a half-century of captivating storytelling, celebrity features, and cultural snapshots that have defined generations. Since its inception in 1974, PEOPLE has been a beacon of pop culture, offering readers an intimate look into the lives of icons and everyday heroes alike. The 50th anniversary issue is a celebration of the people who have helped shape the culture and who will do so for years to come. The cover stars–with a combined 14 primetime Emmys, 16 Golden Globes, five Oscars, four Tonys and 14 Grammys–have achieved that and more. The crew also includes three Sexiest Men Alive, two EGOTs, multiple humanitarian award winners, a World Champion and a G.O.A.T. The 50th anniversary issue includes a full **digital issue**, and an exclusive motion cover that can be found **here**.

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When speaking about his relationship with PEOPLE over the years, Michael J. Fox stated, "PEOPLE has been this chronicler of my life, and I appreciate it. Remember that I was pretty funny and I cared, and all the other stuff just fell in. I just wanted to have a giggle—and I giggled a lot." Drew Barrymore has covered the magazine 15 times throughout her career: "I have been a lifelong lover of this magazine. At every interval that's been symbolic in my life, there is a PEOPLE cover to show for it." When discussing advice she would give to her younger self, Oprah Winfrey says,"The most important thing is to remain centered, so whether you're on the cover of PEOPLE or not, your identity isn't tied to what the rest of the world says it is."

While it's impossible to get the most popular stars in America together for one photo shoot, we turned to celebrity photographer Art Streiber. Art shot our cover stars separately — measuring every chair and place setting precisely — and worked with set designer Anthony Altomare and retoucher Angie Marie Hayes to create the work of art that became our cover. For more on how it came together, read about the making of our 50th Anniversary cover.

From groundbreaking exclusives to heartfelt human-interest stories, PEOPLE has consistently provided readers with a unique blend of entertainment, inspiration, and insight. Its iconic covers have been seen worldwide and featured everyone from Hollywood A-listers to influential leaders, showcasing the diversity and dynamism of the human experience. Tina Turner, in 1981, revealed in PEOPLE how she had survived an abusive marriage, fleeing husband Ike with only 36 cents to her name and a Mobil credit card. In 1998, Michael J. Fox disclosed his Parkinsons' diagnosis in a PEOPLE cover story—and he's since changed the course of research for the disease. When tragedy struck on 9/11, PEOPLE pulled together an issue in less than 24 hours; it was the first U.S. magazine on newsstands after the attack and, with 4 million copies sold, is still the best-selling issue in the magazine's history.

To celebrate the 50th, PEOPLE is working with Fotografiska NY on a photo exhibition to commemorate the anniversary. ***PEOPLE: Celebrating 50 Years*** will open on May 9, 2024, featuring original covers and photographs from the magazine. The unique archive includes images and ephemera that celebrate the world's most beloved celebrities and capture cultural moments that captivated the nation. PEOPLE's success has been deeply connected to the power of the photographic image, with the very first prospectus for the magazine stating, "the succession of dramatic images should make turning the pages irresistible." Some of the greatest photographers of their generation have worked with the magazine, including Martin Schoeller, Harry Benson, Gordon Parks, Co Rentmeester (and daughter Coliena Rentmeester),Ruven Afanador, Cass Bird, Elinor

Carucci and Art Streiber who also created the cover for this week's special issue.

PEOPLE's audience is the largest of any magazine brand in the world. Reaching 90% of zip codes, PEOPLE has defined entertainment news for 50 years, connecting our audience to the pulse of American culture. When looking towards the future, Wendy Naugle, PEOPLE Editor in Chief says, "Someday, there will be another editor sitting in this chair, planning a 75th or 100th anniversary of PEOPLE that will live on the page or a screen or in 3D or some new spatial plane yet to be invented. What tips would I give them? Matthew McConaughey's advice to his younger self sums it up: 'I'd let him figure it out…Take feeder roads off the highway. Get confused, get frustrated, feel lost, and overcome it.' And I'd add: Make it fun. Make it fabulous."

The Next Power Players
These stars have already made a name for themselves inHollywood. Now they're making moves to run the place. This next group of stars featured in PEOPLE's 50th Anniversary issue include: Zendaya, Timothee Chalamet, Lulu Wang, Taylor Swift, Renee Rapp, Yara Shahidi, Jenna Ortega, Olivia Rodrigo, Lil Nas X, Sadie Sink, Amanda Gorman, Jeremy Allen White, Austin Butler and Alex Cooper. When asked about the younger generation, Michael J. Fox mentions Taylor Swift and says, "She moves economies. She changes the way the world works, and that's amazing." Oprah Winfrey named Amanda Gorman and stated, "Whatever the medium, Gorman 'is going to shift the culture. She's got the spiritual grounding and the emotional depth."
READ: The Next Power Players (p. 68)

How PEOPLE Changed my Life
They survived unimaginable circumstances. Now they look back on what happened when they shared their harrowing stories with PEOPLE. Alexa Smagala was featured in the 9/11 issue as a baby alongside her mother Dena Smagala. PEOPLE has kept in touch with the now 22-year-old graduate student who lost her father on Sept. 11th. When speaking with us, Alexa says, "PEOPLE helped connect me to how I really felt. When we did the 20th anniversary story, I came to terms more with the loss." When 18-year-old Natalee Holloway disappeared in Aruba in 2005, PEOPLE joined her mother Beth Holloway, in the search for answers. "[People reporter]Jeff [Truesdell] and I were in Aruba for the same reason: to find out what happened to Natalee. We developed a trust," says Beth. "It's very tiring for families to continue these searches for their missing loved ones, but little threads of information could be around any corner. [People was] a powerful tool in that search, in turning over every stone for answers. In seeking justice." Keishall Barrow was separated from her 20-month-old daughter for three weeks following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. PEOPLE published a successful call to reunite them. "After the PEOPLE story came out, my phone starts ringing off the hook. The first lady that called said, 'Kalise is in Mississippi. Call the sheriff's department. They know where your daughter is,'" said Barrow. Fast-forward, Kalise is now in school to be a journalist. Barrow says, "Kalise, tell your story. Because what are the odds you were in PEOPLE, and now here you are? You're going to be telling other people's stories, but guess what? You already have a story to tell, baby."
READ: How PEOPLE Changed my Life (p. 85)

For more on the 50th Anniversary and this week's special issue, click HERE and pick up the issue on newsstands Friday, April 12th.

PEOPLE MAGAZINE FACTS & FIGURES

- **Mia Farrow** was the first nationwide cover star of PEOPLE onMarch 4, 1974. See cover **HERE** (3.4.74 Issue)
- **Taylor Swift** re-created the Mia Farrow cover for PEOPLE's 40th anniversary issue. See cover **HERE** (10.20.14 Issue)
- PEOPLE's **9/11 issue** is the most sold in the magazine's history with over 4 million copies sold. PEOPLE scrapped the current issue at the time and focused solely on the 9/11 news. The issue was put together in less than 24 hours and was the first magazine to hit newsstands following the terrorist attacks. See cover **HERE** (9.24.01 Issue)
- **Princess Diana** has graced the cover 59 times, the most ever! Her first appearance on the cover was in 1981. See cover **HERE** (6.22.81 Issue)
- **Princess Diana's tribute cover** is the highest-selling tribute cover ever. See cover **HERE** (9.15.97 Issue)
- The first Sexiest Man Alive cover featured **Mel Gibson** in 1985. See here for the full SMA fact sheet. See cover **HERE** (2.4.85 Issue)
- The first "Beautiful Issue" featured **Michelle Pfeiffer** in 1990. See cover **HERE** (Summer 1990)
- PEOPLE did not have a tribute cover for **Elvis Presley**. Dick Stolley, PEOPLE's founding managing editor, declared this has his biggest mistake! (He instead ran a cover of **Marty**

Feldman and **Ann-Margret**. See cover **HERE** 8.29.77 Issue)

- The first tribute cover ever for PEOPLE was for **John Lennon**'s death in 1980. See cover **HERE** (12.22.80 Issue)
- **George Clooney** was in the Sexiest Man Alive issue 22 times (twice on the cover). See Sexiest Man Alive covers **HERE**. Click **HERE** for the Sexiest Man Alive fact sheet
- **Drew Barrymore** was 9 years old when she first appeared on the cover of PEOPLE. See cover **HERE** (11.12.84 Issue)
- ***Charlie's Angels*** were the first TV cast ever to appear on the cover of PEOPLE. See cover **HERE** (12.6.76 Issue)
- **New Kids on the Block** was the first boy band to make the cover of PEOPLE. See cover **HERE** (8.13.90 Issue)
- The PEOPLE logo, except for variations in size and the addition of an outline, hasn't changed since the first official issue. The word "Weekly" was taken off the logo in 2002.
- Entertainment Weekly, InStyle, Teen PEOPLE, PEOPLE StyleWatch, and PEOPLE En Español were all brand extensions of PEOPLE.

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Additional assets available online: Photos **(1)**

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