

**SHERRI
BRANUM
HILL**
1949-



**WEARING
THE
PERFECT
DRESS**

If you have ever watched the Miss USA, Miss America or Miss Universe pageants, you've seen a Sherri Hill original gown. Eight of the Top Ten Miss USA 2009 finishers were wearing a Sherri Hill gown, including the winner. Miss America 2006 Jennifer Berry and 2007 Lauren Nelson, both Oklahomans, were crowned wearing her creations.

Sherri Branum was born in June 1949, in Minco, Oklahoma. Her parents owned a general store selling everything from fabric and clothing to shampoo to candy and school supplies. At age eight, she began working there part-time. The colorful fabric sold in the store sparked Hill's interest in fashion. Eventually she was allowed to dress the four mannequins in the front windows by draping yards of fabric around each.

She studied fashion design at the University of Oklahoma, where she met her husband Charles Hill. In 1985, Sherri became interested in beauty pageants when a Miss Oklahoma contestant bought an off-the-rack gown at her parents' formal-wear store in Oklahoma City. She went to the pageant to see how the girl fared – she made the Top Ten – and discovered a whole new market.

Hill's breakthrough came when Miss Oklahoma wore her gown at the Miss America pageant. The word of mouth that followed led to a promotional deal with the Miss USA/Teen and Miss Universe pageants. In 1987's Miss America pageant, three of the five finalists wore Sherri Hill creations. In 1988, 28 of the 51 contestants wore her dresses.

She worked for twelve years as designer for Jovani Fashions, helping launch the brand. She eventually left in 2008 to start her own evening gown line. Selena Gomez, Carrie Underwood, Miranda Lambert, Zendaya, Ariana Grande, Gabby Douglas, and Fifth Harmony have worn her designs on the red carpet.

Hill debuted at New York Fashion Week in 2011, where she gave Kendall Jenner her first-ever runway gig. In 2012 her show included Kendall and Kylie Jenner. Duck Dynasty's Sadie Robertson, a runner-up on America's Got Talent, walked her shows in 2013 and 2016.

Sherri's meticulous attention to detail is evident in her selection of beautiful fabrics and trimmings combined with innovative combinations of cuts to accentuate a woman's best features. Her dresses come in variety of styles: beautiful layered gowns with dazzling beadwork, classy form-fitting lace gowns, romantic floral designs, and colorful cocktail dresses.

After a 2011 Oklahoma tornado wiped out her warehouses, Hill moved to Austin, Texas. She also maintains a dress design studio/showroom in Atlanta. Today her business has a network of over 1,000 stores in over 52 countries. However, Hill still considers Oklahoma home and attributes much of her success to her roots.

"My childhood in Oklahoma shaped my career in many ways," she said. "Oklahomans are raised with a strong work ethic, combined with the confidence that if we work hard enough, anything is possible. The ability to dream big and the belief that hard work can make that dream reality is the best gift a designer can receive."