

Biography: Nicholas Sparks



Nicholas Charles Sparks was born in Omaha, Nebraska on December 31, 1965, the second son of Patrick Michael (1942-1996) and Jill Emma Marie (Thoene) Sparks (1942-1989). His siblings are Michael Earl Sparks (b. Dec. 1964), and Danielle Sparks (b. Dec. 1966, d. June, 2000). As a child, he lived in Minnesota, Los Angeles, and Grand Island, Nebraska, finally settling in Fair Oaks, California at the age of eight. His father was a professor, his mother a homemaker, then optometrist's assistant. He lived in Fair Oaks through high school, graduated valedictorian in 1984, and received a full track scholarship to the University of Notre Dame.

After breaking the Notre Dame school record as part of a relay team in 1985 as a freshman (a record which still stands), he was injured and spent the summer recovering. During that summer, he wrote his first novel, though it was never published. He majored in Business Finance and graduated with high honors in 1988.

He and his wife Catherine, who met on spring break in 1988, were married in July, 1989. While living in Sacramento, he wrote his second novel that same year, though again, it wasn't published. He worked a variety of jobs over the next three years, including real estate appraisal, waiting tables, selling dental products by phone, and started his own small manufacturing business which struggled from the beginning. In 1990, he collaborated on a book with Billy Mills, the Olympic Gold Medallist and it was published by Feather Publishing before later being picked up by Random House. (It was recently re-issued by Hay House Books.) Though it received scant publicity, sales topped 50,000 copies in the first year of release.

He began selling pharmaceuticals and moved from Sacramento, California to North Carolina in 1992. In 1994, at the age of 28, he wrote *The Notebook* over a period of six months. In October, 1995, rights to *The Notebook* were sold to Warner Books. It was published in October, 1996, and he followed that with *Message in a Bottle* (1998), *A Walk to Remember* (1999), *The Rescue* (2000), *A Bend in the Road* (2001), and *Nights in Rodanthe* (2002), *The Guardian* (2003),

The Wedding (2003), *Three Weeks with my Brother* (2004), *True Believer* (2005) and *At First Sight* (2005) all with Warner Books. All were domestic and international best sellers and were translated into more than 35 languages. The movie version of *Message in a Bottle* was released in 1999, *A Walk to Remember* was released in 2002, and *The Notebook* was released in 2004. The average domestic box office gross per film was \$56 million -- with another \$100 million in DVD sales -- making the novels by Nicholas Sparks one of the most successfully franchises in Hollywood.



The film rights to *Nights in Rodanthe*, *True Believer* and *At First Sight* have been sold, and Nicholas Sparks has written the screenplay for *The Guardian*, though he has not offered it for sale at this point.

He now has five children: Miles, Ryan, Landon, Lexie, and Savannah. He lives in North Carolina with his wife and children.

His ancestry is German, Czech, English, and Irish, he's 5'10" and weighs 180 lbs. He is an avid athlete who runs daily, lifts weights regularly, and competes in Tae Kwon Do. He attends church regularly and reads approximately 125 books a year. He contributes to a variety of local and national charities, and is a major contributor to the Creative Writing Program (MFA) at the University of Notre Dame, where he provides scholarships, internships, and a fellowship annually.