**Michael Joseph Jackson**[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Jackson" \l "cite_note-Legal_name-1) (August 29, 1958 – June 25, 2009) was an American[recording artist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recording_artist), [entertainer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entertainer) and [businessman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Businessman). Often referred to as the [King of Pop](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honorific_nicknames_in_popular_music), or by his initials **MJ**,[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Jackson#cite_note-2) Jackson is recognized as the most successful entertainer of all time by[Guinness World Records](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guinness_World_Records). His contributions to music, dance, and fashion, along with a much-publicized personal life, made him a global figure in [popular culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_culture) for over four decades. The eighth child of the [Jackson family](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jackson_family), he debuted on the professional music scene along with his brothers as a member of [The Jackson 5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Jackson_5) in 1964, and began his solo career in 1971.

