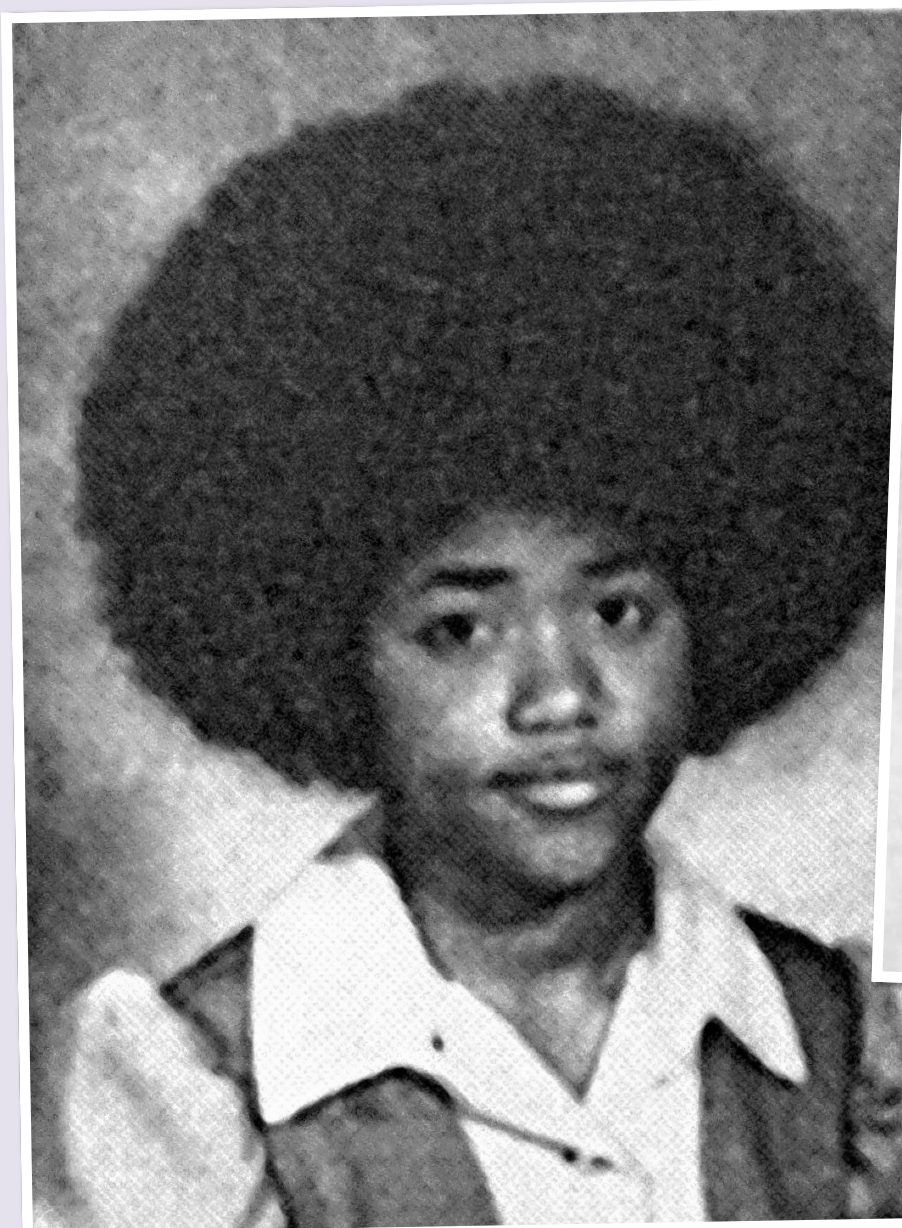


The look that hoo ked Meghan's dad

As Harry's girl said of her parents who may soon be his in-laws...

I like to think he was drawn to her sweet eyes and her Afro, plus their shared love of antiques... whatever it was they married and had me

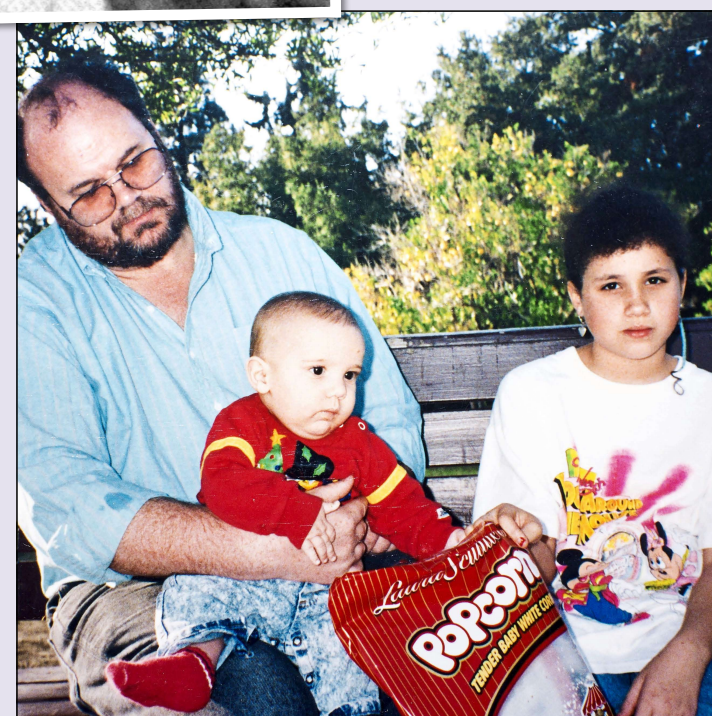
...and here, for the first time, are the charming school photos showing just what Meghan – tipped to be the next Royal bride – meant



SCHOOL DAYS: Doria Ragland in her yearbook photo, aged 16. Above: Aged 18, Tom Markle, the man she would later marry and with whom she would have Meghan, right



ROYAL DATE: Doria with Harry and Meghan. Right: Tom Markle with Meghan at 11



'WHIP SMART': Doria with school friends from the Apex Club – a class for exceptionally bright pupils



FRESH-faced and full of hope for the future she could, surely, never in her wildest dreams have imagined her daughter would one day grow up and fall in love with a prince.

This is Meghan Markle's mother as a teenager with captivating looks, seen in an extraordinary photo published for the first time here in The Mail on Sunday.

Doria Ragland was just 16 and an 'outstanding' pupil at LA's Fairfax High School when these pictures

From **Caroline Graham and Hugo Daniel** in LOS ANGELES

were taken for the school yearbook in 1972. Her life then revolved around her studies, listening to Marvin Gaye and fun-filled nights at a local Mexican taco joint with friends. But just seven years after these pictures were taken, Doria would fall head over heels in love with Thomas Markle, a handsome Hollywood lighting director 12

years her senior. Meghan wrote about their romance saying: 'I like to think he was drawn to her sweet eyes and her Afro plus their shared love of antiques. Whatever it was, they married and had me.'

The pair wed in 1979. And two years later their beloved only daughter Meghan was born who, if the speculation proves to be correct, may soon be engaged to Prince Harry, her boyfriend of 18 months, who has reportedly met Doria on several occasions,

most notably at the Invictus Games in September.

For friends of Doria who remember her as a 'whip smart' member of the school's Apex Club, a class for exceptionally bright pupils, the notion that the young girl who loved flares and fashion is now mingling with the royals is a modern-day fairytale.

'Doria, who was nicknamed Dodi at school, was a beautiful girl, inside and out,' recalls Jennifer Caldwell, 61, a retired pharmaceu-

tical company executive. 'She had this beautiful Afro hairstyle she was so proud of and she was always into fashion.'

'She was always smiling, whip smart and sociable. After she passed her driving test she would borrow her mother's car and we'd go to places like Tico's, a cheap taco place which had long lines. We didn't have much money but we had fun.'

Doria's father Alvin ran an antiques shop and her mother was

a nurse. The modest family home was in a black middle-class area of Los Angeles.

'It was a different era; we were innocent,' Ms Caldwell recalls. 'We listened to a lot of Marvin Gaye records, we had boyfriends but we would never dream of having sex with them. It wasn't like that.'

'It was a political time. Nixon had just been voted in as President, but Dodi and I were more into studies. That's what I remember most. Working hard and getting an edu-

cation was what our parents, especially our mothers, focused on. They hadn't had that freedom.'

After leaving school Doria, 60, worked as an air stewardess, then as a make-up artist which is how she met Tom Markle, a 6ft 4in 'bear' of a man who was already a success in Hollywood working as a lighting director on hit US TV shows.

Now 73, retired and living in Mexico, he is also seen on these pages for the first time as a young

man in a picture from his 1962 yearbook, aged 18, at Newport High School in the working class town of Newport, Pennsylvania.

He was heavily involved in school plays and is listed as a member of the drama club, choir and journalism club. In the caption next to his photo he lists his interests as 'old cars, hunting, reading' before adding the catchphrase: 'The show must go on!'

Suits star Meghan credits her 'remarkable' parents for her suc-

cess in life. She talked about growing up in a biracial family and embracing her heritage.

Though they divorced in 1987, when she was just six, Tom and Doria remained friends.

Meghan calls her mother, who went back to university as a mature student and earned a masters degree in social work, 'her inspiration.' On Mother's Day last year she posted a picture of Doria on Instagram writing: 'Always proud of this beautiful woman.'