

**LARGER THAN  
LIFE**  
A CELEBRATION OF GREATNESS

**WALT DISNEY**

1901-1966



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## INTRODUCTION

Walt Disney was an American film producer, director, screenwriter, voice actor, animator, entrepreneur, and philanthropist. Disney is notable as one of the most influential and innovative figures in the field of entertainment during the twentieth century. The corporation he co-founded, now known as The Walt Disney Company, today has annual revenues of approximately U.S. \$30 billion.

## BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

Walt Disney was born on December 5, 1901 in Chicago Illinois. After Walt's birth, the Disney family moved to Marceline Missouri, Walt lived most of his childhood here. Walt had very early interests in art; he would often sell drawings to neighbors to make extra money. He pursued his art career, by studying art and photography by going to McKinley High School in Chicago. Walt began to love, and appreciate nature and wildlife, and family and community, which were a large part of agrarian living.

## EARLY CAREER

During the fall of 1918, Disney attempted to enlist for military service. He was ejected because he was under age, only sixteen years old at the time. Instead, Walt joined the Red Cross and was sent overseas to France, where he spent a year driving an ambulance and

chauffeuring Red Cross officials. His ambulance was covered from stem to stern, not with stock camouflage, but with Disney cartoons.

## CAREER IN ART

Once Walt returned from France, he began to pursue a career in commercial art. He started a small company called Laugh-O-Grams, which eventually fell bankrupt. With his suitcase, and twenty dollars, Walt headed to Hollywood to start anew.

After making a success of his "Alice Comedies," Walt became a recognized Hollywood figure. Mickey Mouse was created in 1928 and Mickey made his screen debut in "Steamboat Willie," the world's first fully-synchronized sound cartoon. Walt's drive to perfect the art of animation was endless. Technicolor was introduced to animation during the production of his 'Silly Symphonies'.

In 1932, the production entitled **Flowers and Trees** (the first color cartoon) won Walt the first of his studio's Academy Awards. In 1937, he released **The Old Mill**, the first short subject to utilize the multi-plane camera technique.

On December 21, 1937, **Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs**, the first full-length animated musical feature,

premiered at the Carthay Theater in Los Angeles. The film produced at the unheard cost of \$1,499,000 during the depths of the Depression, the film is still considered one of the great feats and imperishable monuments of the motion picture industry. During the next five years, Walt Disney Studios completed other full-length animated classics such as **Pinocchio, Fantasia, Dumbo, and Bambi.**

## DISNEYLAND PARK

Walt Disney's dream of a clean, and organized amusement park came true, as **Disneyland Park opened in 1955.** Walt also became a television pioneer, Disney began television production in 1954, and was among the first to present full-color programming with his Wonderful World of Color in 1961.

## DEATH

**He died on December 15, 1966.** He was cremated December 17, 1966 and his ashes reside at the Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California. Walt Disney is a legend; a folk hero of the 20th century. **His worldwide popularity was based upon his imagination, optimism, creation, and self-made success in the American tradition.**

## Did You Know?

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- Among many awards, Walt Disney **holds the record for having the most Academy Awards** - 22 in competitive categories, and 4 honorary.
- Walt **Disney only attended one year of high school.**
- In 1923, in California, Walt and Roy formed the Disney Brothers Studio. At Roy's insistence, the company soon became the Walt Disney Studio, since he felt that Walt's name should be emphasized. This is officially recognized as the starting date of The Walt Disney Company.
- He was the **voice of Mickey Mouse for two decades.**
- When Walt was younger he was **hired to work at the Kansas City Star newspaper.** He was later **fired from the paper because of lack of creativity.** Years **later The Disney Company bought ABC, which owned The Kansas City Star.**

## Quotes

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**“All your dreams can come true if you have the courage to pursue them.”**



**“It's kind of fun to do the impossible.”**