

# CHUCK AMUCK: A LEGACY OF LAUGHTER

from the collection of the Chuck Jones Center for Creativity

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During the Golden Age of animation and in a career spanning more than 60 years, Chuck Jones helped bring to life many of Warner Bros. most famous and beloved characters: Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd and Porky Pig. The list of characters he created includes Road Runner, Wile E. Coyote, Marvin Martian, Pepe le Pew and Michigan J. Frog. During his lifetime, Jones made more than 300 animated films, won three Oscars as a director and was awarded honorary life membership to the Directors Guild of America and an honorary Oscar for Lifetime Achievement. The exhibition at Tempe Center for the Arts was the largest and most comprehensive exhibition of art and artifacts by Jones since his retrospective at the Capital Children's Museum in Washington, D.C., in 1988.

## Satellite Exhibitions

The Books of Chuck Jones:

Black and White and Read All Over

Dec. 23-June 18, Tempe Public Library Youth Library

Chuck Jones: An Animated Life

Dec. 19 - May 16

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## About Chuck Jones

Chuck Jones was born on Sept. 21, 1912, in Spokane, Wash., but at six months of age, his family moved to Hollywood. Jones was surrounded by a number of humorous and philosophical family members. He became a chronic reader by age three under the guidance of his father who would say, "How can you tell what good writing is unless you've encountered bad writing?" While growing up, the Jones' house was located just down the street from the film studios on La Brea Avenue. Jones and other neighborhood children would work occasionally as movie extras and used to see silent film stars, like Mary Pickford, riding down the street; they also watched Charlie Chaplin at work. Admittedly, Jones found the endless takes and repetition of Chaplin's process dull, but later as an animator he understood the "incredible craft" it took to make those scenes look effortless. He and other Warner animators credit those early silent films for influencing their sense of timing, choreography and humor.

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In 1928, Jones was enrolled at the prestigious Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles (now California Institute of the Arts) along with his two sisters. To help pay for school, he worked two janitorial jobs mornings and evenings. At the time, animation schools were virtually non-existent, so learning to “draw the human body in simple graphic terms– with the simple single line– (was) the best possible tool for any career in the graphic arts.” In fact, as an animator, he continued to hone his drawing skills at the Chouinard Institute’s master classes for several years after graduating. He also continued to be an avid fine arts painter, did drawing studies wherever he traveled and sketched at places like the San Diego Zoo throughout his life.



In 1932, as a young artist, Jones earned his first job in the fledgling animation industry as a cel washer for former Disney animator, Ubbe Iwerks, who oddly enough ended up firing him not once, but twice at Iwerks Studios. In the same year, he also married Dorothy Webster and they had one daughter, Linda, in 1937. Between working for Iwerks, he worked for Walter Lantz at Universal Studios and afterwards as a street-side dollar portrait painter. He also worked on Olvera Street in Los Angeles briefly with the Yale puppeteers from whom he learned that “gravity is what believability is all about.”

In 1933 Jones was hired by Friz Freleng as an assistant animator for the Leon Schlesinger Studio (later sold to Warner Bros. Studios) and, in 1938, he directed his first film, *The Night Watchman*. Jones stayed at Warner Bros. until the animation studio closed in 1962. During that time he worked alongside other influential animation pioneers such as Tex Avery, Bob Clampett, Friz Freleng and Robert McKimson and created some of the most popular cartoon characters such as Road Runner, Wile E. Coyote, Marvin Martian, Pepé Le Pew and Michigan J. Frog. His films also received two Academy Awards in 1950 while at Warner Bros. for best animated short subject *For Scent-imental Reasons* and best documentary short subject *So Much for So Little*.

In 1962, Jones established his own production company, Chuck Jones Enterprises and produced nine, half-hour animation films for television, including *Cricket in Times Square* (1973) and *Rudyard Kipling’s The White Seal* (1974) and *Rikki Tikki Tavi* (1975). From 1963-1971, Jones also worked as head of the animation department at MGM Studios where he re-vamped and directed new episodes of the *Tom and Jerry* cartoon series and produced, co-directed and co-wrote the screenplays for *The Phantom Tollbooth* feature length film, the classic *Dr. Seuss’* collaborations *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and *Horton Hears a Who!* and won an Academy Award in 1966 for *The Dot and the Line*.



Jones and daughter, Linda

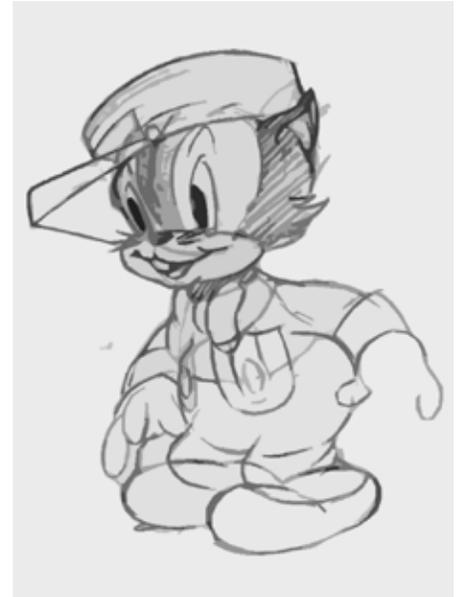
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*How the Grinch Stole Christmas*

In the 1980s and 90s, Jones' lifetime achievements started receiving worldwide acclaim with exhibitions and film festivals including a Golden Age Anniversary Tribute at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in 1985 and film retrospectives at the British Film Institute in London, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and the American Film Institute. In 1983 he married

his second wife and great love Marian Dern. In 1996 he was honored with an Honorary Oscar by the Board of Governors' of the Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences, an Honorary Life Membership Award from the Director's Guild of America and a Smithsonian Institution Medal of Achievement.



*The Night Watchman* from 1938

Jones spent some of the later years of his life as a guest lecturer at some of the nation's most prestigious universities including Columbia, Harvard, Yale and the University of California Los Angeles and as an author, writing books about his experiences in the animation industry. The books include *Chuck Amuck: The Life and Times of an Animated Cartoonist* (1989) and *Chuck Reducks: Drawing from the Fun Side of Life* (1996).



*Buck and a Quarter*

Jones and daughter Linda established the Chuck Jones Center for Creativity (CJCC) in 1999 to inspire an individual's creativity and promote an environment where that spirit can flourish. In February 2002, Jones died at the age of 89 and left behind his daughter, three grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. His family and the Chuck Jones Center continue his legacy of joy, color and laughter. His grandson, Craig Kausen, is the Chairman of the Board of the Center, a non profit organization which provides educational programs, exhibitions and creative inspiration using Jones's work as its foundation.

To learn more about Chuck Jones, visit [www.ChuckJonesCenter.org](http://www.ChuckJonesCenter.org).