

Robert Young  
Ryan Ellett

Robert Young, a native of Chicago, was born February 22, 1907 to an Irish immigrant, Thomas Young, and his wife Margaret. As a child his family moved around but by the time he finished high school they had settled in Southern California and Young soon moved into show business. He appeared in bit parts in silent films, toured with a stock company, and got some formal training at the Pasadena Playhouse.

Young's Hollywood career dates to 1931 when he appeared in his first MGM picture, one of the Charlie Chan series. Over the next twenty years Young appeared in more than 100 films, primarily of the "B" variety. It was Robert Young's contract with MGM that led him to his first regular radio work, as a semi-regular emcee of MGM's and General Foods' *Good News of 1938* and *1939*. This dually sponsored series brought MGM contract actors to the air every week in promotional adaptations of upcoming movies.

Throughout the 1940s Robert Young found himself regularly appearing on the air, most often in *Lux Radio Theatre* but in other light drama programs including *The Lady Esther Screen Guild*, *The Silver Theatre*, and *The Cavalcade of America*. During their time sharing the microphone on the *Good News* series, Young and Frank Morgan must have developed a good working relationship as Young continued to be a regular on *Good News'* successor series *Maxwell House Coffee Time*, sometimes called *The Frank Morgan Show*.

Young's most widely-remembered radio role was that of Jim Anderson, the namesake character of the sitcom *Father Knows Best*. He starred in the radio version from 1949 until 1954 when the show transitioned to television with an entirely new cast except for him. The small screen version aired until 1960.

The latter years of Robert Young's career were spent in roles on television series and made-for-TV movies. His nearly 50-year acting career culminated with the title role on the early-1970s medical drama, *Marcus Welby, M.D.* Young made special televised appearances in following years reprising his parts of both Jim Anderson and Marcus Welby. His final acting credit is a 1988 Marcus Welby holiday film.

Off screen Robert Young was married to Betty Henderson for 61 years, their marriage resulting in four daughters. Young struggled with mental health issues throughout his life and worked diligently for mental health funding in his home state of Illinois. The Robert Young Center for Community Mental Health located in the Illinois Quad Cities remains a testament to his focus on this issue.