

Edward James  
Ryan Ellett

Edward James, born June 8, 1908, in New York City grew up just three blocks from Brooklyn's famed Ebbetts Field. This led to a life-long devotion to the Dodgers baseball team even after they left for California. James graduated from Syracuse University with the goal of becoming a sports writer. Instead, he cemented his legacy as a sitcom writer during the television era. Like many who found success in the early years of TV, however, Ed James honed his skills first on radio.

James' first writing was for early 1940s screenplays that included *Lady From Louisiana* (1941), *Over My Dead Body* (1942), and *Rookies in Burma* (1943). Records of the time indicate that James began writing for radio in the mid-1940s. However, details about specific writing assignments during this era are frustratingly difficult to find.

James broke into radio's limelight in 1949 when he created and initially wrote the scripts for *Father Knows Best*, a program that would go on to gain considerable fame on television. Around 1952 James handed off the writing chores to Paul West and by 1953 he was a regular on the writing team of *The Phil Harris-Alice Faye Show*.

During the 1950s Ed James increasingly focused on television and was called on to pen scripts for a number of classic comedies of the era, including *Leave it to Beaver*, *Petticoat Junction*, and *F Troop*.

James retired from writing in the early 1970s and enjoyed listening to baseball games in the years that followed. He especially enjoyed spending time with his wife, Louise, five children, and eight grandchildren. After battling emphysema for several months Ed James died on March 6, 1995.