

= Jim Henson =

James Maury " Jim " Henson ( September 24 , 1936 ? May 16 , 1990 ) was an American puppeteer , artist , cartoonist , inventor , screenwriter , songwriter , musician , actor , film director , and producer who achieved international fame as the creator of the Muppets . Born in Greenville , Mississippi , and raised in Leland , Mississippi , and Hyattsville , Maryland , Henson began developing puppets while attending high school . While he was a freshman at the University of Maryland , College Park , he created Sam and Friends , a five @-@ minute sketch @-@ comedy puppet show that appeared on television . After graduating from the University of Maryland with a degree in home economics , he produced coffee advertisements and developed some experimental films . Feeling the need for more creative output , Henson founded Muppets Inc. in 1958 ( which would later become the Jim Henson Company ) .

Henson became famous in the 1960s when he joined the children 's educational television program Sesame Street , and there helped develop characters for the series . He also appeared in the sketch comedy show Saturday Night Live . In 1976 , after scrapping plans for a Broadway show , he produced The Muppet Show . He won fame for his creations , particularly Kermit the Frog , Rowlf the Dog , and Ernie , and he was involved with Sesame Street for over 20 years . He also had frequent roles in Muppets films such as The Muppet Movie , The Great Muppet Caper and The Muppets Take Manhattan , and created advanced puppets for projects like Fraggle Rock , The Dark Crystal , and Labyrinth . During the later years of his life , he also founded the Jim Henson Foundation , and Jim Henson 's Creature Shop . His involvement in two television programs ? The Storyteller and The Jim Henson Hour ? led to Emmy Awards wins .

Henson died suddenly in May 1990 , aged 53 , from streptococcal toxic shock syndromes ? an unexpected event that was widely lamented in the film and television industries . In the weeks after his death , he was celebrated in a wave of tributes . He was posthumously inducted into Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1991 , and as a Disney Legend in 2011 .

= = Early life : 1936 ? 61 = =

Born in Greenville , Mississippi on September 24 , 1936 , Henson was the younger of two children of Paul Ransom Henson ( 1904 ? 1994 ) , an agronomist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture , and his wife , Betty Marcella ( née Brown ; 1904 ? 1972 ) . He was raised as a Christian Scientist and spent his early childhood in Leland , Mississippi , before moving with his family to Hyattsville , Maryland , near Washington , D.C. , in the late 1940s . He later remembered the arrival of the family 's first television as " the biggest event of his adolescence , " having been heavily influenced by radio ventriloquist Edgar Bergen and the early television puppets of Burr Tillstrom ( on Kukla , Fran , and Ollie ) and Bil and Cora Baird .

He remained a Christian Scientist at least into his twenties when he would teach Sunday School but fifteen years before he died he wrote to a Christian Science church to inform them he was no longer a practicing member .

In 1954 , while attending Northwestern High School , he began working for WTOP @-@ TV ( now WUSA @-@ TV ) , creating puppets for a Saturday morning children 's show called The Junior Morning Show . After graduating from high school , Henson enrolled at the University of Maryland , College Park , as a studio arts major , thinking he might become a commercial artist . A puppetry class offered in the applied arts department introduced him to the craft and textiles courses in the College of Home Economics , and he graduated in 1960 with a BS in home economics . As a freshman , he had been asked to create Sam and Friends , a five @-@ minute puppet show for WRC @-@ TV . The characters on Sam and Friends were forerunners of Muppets , and the show included a prototype of Henson 's most famous character : Kermit the Frog . Henson would remain at WRC for seven years from 1954 to 1961 . Among the first of his assignments at WRC was Afternoon , a magazine show aimed at housewives . This marked his first collaboration with Jane Nebel ? the woman who later became his wife .

In the show , he began experimenting with techniques that would change the way puppetry had

been used on television , including using the frame defined by the camera shot to allow the puppet performer to work from off @-@ camera . Believing that television puppets needed to have " life and sensitivity , " Henson began making characters from flexible , fabric @-@ covered foam rubber , allowing them to express a wider array of emotions at a time when many puppets were made of carved wood . A marionette 's arms are manipulated by strings , but Henson used rods to move his Muppets ' arms , allowing greater control of expression . Additionally , Henson wanted the Muppet characters to " speak " more creatively than was possible for previous puppets ? which had seemed to have random mouth movements ? so he used precise mouth movements to match the dialogue .

When Henson began work on Sam and Friends , he asked fellow University of Maryland sophomore Jane Nebel to assist him . The show was a financial success , but after graduating from college , Henson began to have doubts about going into a career performing with puppets . He wandered off to Europe for several months , where he was inspired by European puppet performances which look on their work as an art form . Upon Henson 's return to the United States , he and Jane began dating . They were married in 1959 and had five children , Lisa ( b . 1960 ) , Cheryl ( b . 1961 ) , Brian ( b . 1963 ) , John ( b . 1965 , d . 2014 ) , and Heather ( b . 1970 ) .

= = Television and Muppets : 1961 ? 69 = =

Despite the success of Sam and Friends , Henson spent much of the next two decades working in commercials , talk shows , and children 's projects before being able to realize his dream of the Muppets as " entertainment for everybody " . The popularity of his work on Sam and Friends in the late fifties led to a series of guest appearances on network talk and variety shows . Henson himself appeared as a guest on many shows , including The Steve Allen Show , The Jack Paar Program and The Ed Sullivan Show ( although on his appearance on the Sept 11 , 1966 , episode of the show ? released to DVD on 2011 as part of a collection of episodes featuring the Rolling Stones ? Sullivan mis @-@ introduced Henson as " Jim Newsom and his Puppets " ) . This first national television broadcast greatly increased exposure , which led to hundreds of commercial appearances by Henson characters throughout the sixties . During some downtime during a 1964 appearance on the Jack Paar Program , Henson , Frank Oz , Jerry Juhl , and Don Sahlin found a closet door in their dressing room , behind which there were some exposed pipes . They decided to decorate the pipes , adding paint and fake fur to the pipes to give them goofy and monstrous faces . Everyone in the studio was highly entertained by the pipes , but the door was closed and the pipes were largely forgotten . They were rediscovered in 1980 , when some construction workers were knocking down walls for a remodel and found the pipes . The pipes were left alone , but when Jimmy Fallon took over as Late Night host in 2009 , he encouraged NBC to add the pipes to the studio tour . In 2010 , the pipes were placed in a permanent display as a stop on the tour .

Among the most popular of Henson 's commercials was a series for the local Wilkins Coffee company in Washington , D.C. , in which his Muppets were able to get away with a greater level of slapstick violence than might have been acceptable with human actors and would later find its way into many acts on The Muppet Show . In the first Wilkins ad , a Muppet named Wilkins is poised behind a cannon seen in profile . Another Muppet named Wontkins ( with Rowlf 's voice ) is in front of its barrel . Wilkins asks , " What do you think of Wilkins Coffee ? " and Wontkins responds gruffly , " Never tasted it ! " Wilkins fires the cannon and blows Wontkins away , then turns the cannon directly toward the viewer and ends the ad with , " Now , what do you think of Wilkins ? " Henson later explained , " Till then , advertising agencies believed that the hard sell was the only way to get their message over on television . We took a very different approach . We tried to sell things by making people laugh . " The first seven @-@ second commercial for Wilkins was an immediate hit and was syndicated and re @-@ shot by Henson for local coffee companies across the United States ; he ultimately produced more than 300 coffee ads . The same setup was used to pitch Kraml Milk in the Chicago area , Red Diamond coffee , several bread products , and even Faygo .

In 1963 , Henson and his wife moved to New York City , where the newly formed Muppets , Inc . , would reside for some time . Jane quit performing to raise their children . Henson hired writer Jerry Juhl in 1961 and puppet performer Frank Oz in 1963 to replace her . Henson later credited both with

developing much of the humor and character of his Muppets . Henson and Oz developed a close friendship and a performing partnership that lasted 27 years ; their teamwork is particularly evident in their portrayals of the characters of Bert and Ernie , Kermit and Miss Piggy , and Kermit and Fozzie Bear .

Henson 's 1960s talk show appearances culminated when he devised Rowlf , a piano @-@ playing anthropomorphic dog . Rowlf became the first Muppet to make regular appearances on a network show , The Jimmy Dean Show . Henson was so grateful for this break that he offered Jimmy Dean a 40 % interest in his production company , but Dean declined stating that Henson deserved all the rewards for his own work , a decision of conscience Dean never regretted . From 1963 to 1966 , Henson began exploring film @-@ making and produced a series of experimental films . His nine @-@ minute experimental film , Time Piece , was nominated for an Academy Award for Live Action Short Film in 1966 . The year 1969 saw the production of The Cube ? another Henson @-@ produced experimental movie .

Also around this time , the first drafts of a live @-@ action experimental movie script were written with Jerry Juhl , which would eventually become Henson 's last unproduced full @-@ length screenplay , Tale of Sand . The script remained in the Henson Company archives until the screenplay was adapted in the 2012 graphic novel , Jim Henson 's Tale of Sand .

= = Sesame Street : 1969 = =

In 1969 , television producer Joan Ganz Cooney and her staff at the Children 's Television Workshop , impressed by the quality and creativity of the Henson @-@ led team , asked Henson and staff to work full @-@ time on Sesame Street , a visionary children 's program for public television . This union of talents would become legendary in television entertainment .

Part of the show was set aside for a series of funny , colorful , puppet characters living on the titular street . These included Grover , Oscar the Grouch , Bert and Ernie , Cookie Monster , Elmo , and Big Bird . Henson performed the characters of Ernie , game @-@ show host Guy Smiley , and Kermit , who appeared as a roving television news reporter . It was around this time that a frill was added around Kermit 's neck to make him more frog @-@ like . The collar was functional as well : it covered the joint where the Muppet 's neck and body met .

At first , Henson 's Muppets appeared separately from the realistic segments on the Street , but after a poor test @-@ screening in Philadelphia , Pennsylvania , the show was revamped to integrate the two , placing much greater emphasis on Henson 's work . Though Henson would often downplay his role in Sesame Street 's success , Cooney frequently praised Jim 's work and , in 1990 , the Public Broadcasting Service called him " the spark that ignited our fledgling broadcast service . " The success of Sesame Street also allowed Henson to stop producing commercials . He later remembered that " it was a pleasure to get out of that world " .

In addition to creating and performing Muppet characters , Henson was involved in producing various shows and animation insets during the first two seasons . During the first , Henson produced a series of counting films for the numbers 1 through 10 , which always ended with a baker ( voiced by Henson ) falling down the stairs while carrying the featured number of desserts . For seasons two to seven , Henson worked on a variety of inserts for the numbers 2 through 12 , in a number of different styles ? including film ( " Dollhouse " , " Number Three Ball Film " ) , stop @-@ motion ( " King of Eight " , " Queen of Six " ) , cut @-@ out animation ( " Eleven Cheer " ) , and computer animation ( " Nobody Counts To 10 " ) . Jim Henson also directed the original C Is For Cookie .

Concurrently with the first years of Sesame Street , Henson directed Tales from Muppetland , a short series of TV movie specials ? in the form of comedic telling of classic fairy tales ? aimed at a young audience and hosted by Kermit the Frog . The series included Hey , Cinderella ! , The Frog Prince , and The Muppet Musicians of Bremen .

= = Expansion of audience : 1970 ? 77 = =

Concerned that the company was becoming typecast solely as a purveyor of children 's

entertainment , Henson , Frank Oz , and his team targeted an adult audience with a series of sketches on the first season of the groundbreaking comedy series Saturday Night Live ( SNL ) . Eleven " Dregs and Vestiges " sketches , set mostly in the Land of Gorch , aired between October 1975 and January 1976 [ inclusive ] , with four additional appearances in March , April , May , and September [ of 1976 ] . Henson recalled that " I saw what [ creator Lorne Michaels ] was going for and I really liked it and wanted to be a part of it , but somehow what we were trying to do and what his writers could write for it never gelled . " The SNL writers never got comfortable writing for the characters , and frequently disparaged Henson 's creations ; one , Michael O 'Donoghue , quipped , " I won 't write for felt . "

Around the time of Henson 's characters ' final appearances on SNL , he began developing two projects featuring the Muppets : a Broadway show and a weekly television series . In 1976 , the series was initially rejected by the American networks who believed that Muppets would appeal to only a child audience . Then Henson pitched the show to British impresario Lew Grade to finance the show . The show would be shot in the United Kingdom and syndicated worldwide . That same year , he scrapped plans for his Broadway show and moved his creative team to England , where The Muppet Show began taping . The Muppet Show featured Kermit as host , and a variety of other memorable characters , notably Miss Piggy , Gonzo the Great , and Fozzie Bear , along with other characters such as Animal . Kermit 's role on The Muppet Show was often compared by his co @-@ workers to Henson 's role in Muppet Productions : a shy , gentle boss with " A whim of steel " who " [ ran ] things as firmly as it is possible to run an explosion in a mattress factory . " Carroll Spinney , the puppet performer of Big Bird and Oscar the Grouch , remembered that Henson " would never say he didn 't like something . He would just go ' Hmm . ' That was famous . And if he liked it , he would say , ' Lovely ! ' " Henson himself recognized Kermit as an alter @-@ ego , though he thought that Kermit was bolder than he ; he once said of the character , " He can say things I hold back . "

Jim Henson was the performer for several well @-@ known characters , including Kermit the Frog , Rowlf the Dog , Dr. Teeth , the Swedish Chef , Waldorf , and Link Hogthrob .

In 1977 , Henson produced a one @-@ hour television adaptation of the Russell Hoban story Emmet Otter 's Jug @-@ Band Christmas .

= = Transition to the big screen : 1979 ? 82 = =

Three years after the start of The Muppet Show , the Muppets appeared in their first theatrical feature film The Muppet Movie . The movie was both a critical and financial success ; it made US \$ 65 @.@ 2 million domestically and was at the time the 61st highest @-@ grossing film ever made .

A song from the film , " The Rainbow Connection " , sung by Henson as Kermit , hit number 25 on the Billboard Hot 100 and was nominated for a Best Song Academy Award . In 1981 , a Henson @-@ directed sequel , The Great Muppet Caper , followed , and Henson decided to end the still @-@ popular Muppet Show to concentrate on making films . From time to time , the Muppet characters continued to appear in made @-@ for @-@ TV @-@ movies and television specials .

In addition to his own puppetry projects , Henson aided others in their work . In 1979 , he was asked by the producers of the Star Wars sequel The Empire Strikes Back to aid make @-@ up artist Stuart Freeborn in the creation and articulation of enigmatic Jedi Master Yoda . Henson suggested to Star Wars creator George Lucas , himself a Muppets fan , that he use Frank Oz as the puppeteer and voice of Yoda . Oz voiced Yoda in The Empire Strikes Back and each of the four subsequent Star Wars films . The naturalistic , lifelike Yoda became one of the most popular characters of the Star Wars franchise . Lucas even lobbied unsuccessfully to have Oz nominated for a Best Supporting Actor Academy Award .

In 1982 , Henson founded the Jim Henson Foundation to promote and develop the art of puppetry in the United States . Around that time , he began creating darker and more realistic fantasy films that did not feature the Muppets and displayed " a growing , brooding interest in mortality . " With 1982 's The Dark Crystal , which he co @-@ directed with Frank Oz and co @-@ wrote , Henson said he was " trying to go toward a sense of realism ? toward a reality of creatures that are actually alive [ where ] it 's not so much a symbol of the thing , but you 're trying to [ present ] the thing itself .

" To provide a visual style distinct from the Muppets , the puppets in The Dark Crystal were based on conceptual artwork by Brian Froud .

The Dark Crystal was a financial and critical success and , a year later , the Muppet @-@ starring The Muppets Take Manhattan ( directed by Frank Oz ) did fair box @-@ office business , grossing \$ 25 @. @ 5 million domestically and ranking as one of the top 40 films of 1984 . However , 1986 's Labyrinth , a Crystal @-@ like fantasy that Henson directed by himself , was considered ( in part due to its cost ) a commercial disappointment . Despite some positive reviews ( The New York Times called it " a fabulous film " ) , the commercial failure of Labyrinth demoralized Henson to the point that son Brian Henson remembered the time of its release as being " the closest I 've seen him to turning in on himself and getting quite depressed . " The film later became a cult classic .

Henson and his wife separated the same year , although they remained close for the rest of his life . Jane later said that Jim was so involved with his work that he had very little time to spend with her or their children . All five of his children began working with Muppets at an early age , partly because , as Cheryl Henson remembered , " one of the best ways of being around him was to work with him . "

= = Later life and death : 1983 ? 90 = =

Though he was still engaged in creating children 's television , such as the successful eighties shows Fraggle Rock and the animated Muppet Babies , Henson continued to explore darker , mature themes with the folk tale and mythology @-@ oriented show The Storyteller ( 1988 ) , which won an Emmy for Outstanding Children 's Program . The next year , Henson returned to television with The Jim Henson Hour , which mixed lighthearted Muppet fare with riskier material . The show was critically well received and won Henson another Emmy for Outstanding Directing in a Variety or Music Program , but was canceled after 13 episodes due to low ratings . Henson blamed its failure on NBC 's constant rescheduling .

In late 1989 , Henson entered into negotiations to sell his company to The Walt Disney Company for almost \$ 150 million , hoping that , with Disney handling business matters , he would " be able to spend a lot more of my time on the creative side of things . " By 1990 , he had completed production on a television special , The Muppets at Walt Disney World , and a Disney World ( later Disney California Adventure Park as well ) attraction , Jim Henson 's Muppet \* Vision 3D , and was developing film ideas and a television series titled Muppet High . He also made a Disney show called Little Mermaid 's Island .

In the late 1980s , Henson worked with illustrator / designer William Stout on a feature film starring animatronic dinosaurs with the working title of The Natural History Project . In 1991 , news stories written around the premiere of The Jim Henson Company @-@ produced Dinosaurs sitcom highlighted the show 's connection to Henson . " Jim Henson dreamed up the show 's basic concept about three years ago , " said a New York Times article in April 1991 .

'He wanted it to be a sitcom with a pretty standard structure , with the biggest differences being that it 's a family of dinosaurs and their society has this strange toxic life style , ' said [ his son ] Brian Henson . But until The Simpsons took off , said Alex Rockwell , a vice president of the Henson organization , ' people thought it was a crazy idea.'

A New Yorker article said that Henson continued to work on a dinosaur project ( presumably the Dinosaurs concept ) until the " last months of his life . "

During production of his 1990 projects Henson traveled continuously . By late Spring , Henson began to experience recurring flu @-@ like symptoms . On May 4 , 1990 , Henson appeared with Kermit on The Arsenio Hall Show , one of his last television appearances . At the time , he mentioned to his publicist that he was tired and had a sore throat , but felt that it would go away .

On May 12 , 1990 , Henson traveled to Ahoskie , North Carolina , with his daughter Cheryl , to visit his father and stepmother . They both returned to New York on May 13 , and Henson cancelled a Muppet recording session scheduled for May 14 . That night , Henson 's wife Jane , from whom he was separated , came to visit for the last time . Hours later , on May 15 , Henson was having trouble breathing and began coughing up blood . He suggested to his wife that he might be dying , but did

not want to take time from his schedule to visit a hospital . Jane later stated that while Henson 's Christian Science upbringing " affect [ ed ] his general thinking " , it did not have any influence on his postponement of medical treatment , and still later told People magazine that his avoidance was likely due to his desire not to be a bother to anyone . His stepmother and others also denied rumors that Henson 's Christian Science beliefs might have contributed to his death , as Henson had ceased practicing in his early 20s .

Two hours later , Henson finally agreed to go to New York Hospital in New York City . By the time he was admitted shortly after 4 : 00 am , he could no longer breathe on his own , and an X @-@ ray revealed he had abscesses in his lungs . He was placed on a mechanical ventilator to help him breathe , but his condition deteriorated rapidly despite aggressive treatment with multiple antibiotics . Less than 24 hours later on May 16 , 1990 , Henson died at the age of 53 .

The official cause of death was first reported as *Streptococcus pneumoniae* , a bacterial infection that causes bacterial pneumonia . It was later classified as organ failure resulting from streptococcal toxic shock syndrome ( caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes* ) . *S. pyogenes* is the bacterial species that causes strep throat , scarlet fever , and rheumatic fever . It can also cause other infections .

On May 21 , Henson 's public memorial service was conducted in New York City at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine . Another was conducted on July 2 at St. Paul 's Cathedral in London . In accordance with Henson 's will , no one in attendance wore black , and The Dirty Dozen Brass Band finished the service by performing " When the Saints Go Marching In " . Harry Belafonte sang " Turn the World Around , " a song he had debuted on The Muppet Show , as each member of the congregation waved , with a puppet performer 's rod , an individual , brightly colored foam butterfly . Later , Big Bird , performed by Caroll Spinney , walked out onto the stage and sang Kermit the Frog 's signature song , " Bein ' Green " .

In the final minutes of the two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half @-@ hour service , six of the core Muppet performers ? Dave Goelz , Frank Oz , Kevin Clash , Steve Whitmire , Jerry Nelson , and Richard Hunt ? sang , in their characters ' voices , a medley of Jim Henson 's favorite songs , eventually ending with a performance of " Just One Person " that began with Richard Hunt singing alone , as Scooter . Henson employee Chris Barry writes that during each verse , " each Muppeteer joined in with their own Muppets until the stage was filled with all the Muppet performers and their beloved characters . " The funeral was later described by Life as " an epic and almost unbearably moving event . " The image of a growing number of performers singing " Just One Person " was recreated for the 1990 television special The Muppets Celebrate Jim Henson and inspired screenwriter Richard Curtis , who attended the London service , to write the growing @-@ orchestra wedding scene of his 2003 film Love Actually .

= = Legacy = =

The Jim Henson Company and the Jim Henson Foundation continued after his death , producing new series and specials . Jim Henson 's Creature Shop , founded by Henson , also continues to build creatures for a large number of other films and series ( e.g. the science @-@ fiction production Farscape , the film adaptation of The Hitchhiker 's Guide to the Galaxy , and the movie MirrorMask ) and is considered one of the most advanced and well @-@ respected creators of film creatures . His son Brian and daughter Lisa are currently the co @-@ chairs and co @-@ CEOs of the company ; his daughter Cheryl is the president of the foundation . Steve Whitmire , a veteran member of the Muppet puppeteering crew , has assumed the roles of Kermit the Frog and Ernie , the most famous characters formerly played by Jim Henson . Whitmire also assumed the roles of Link Hogthrob , from the " Pigs in Space " " Muppet Show " sketch , starting with the video game " Muppets Racemania " from 2000 , as well as The Muppet Newsman , starting in 2008 , with Muppet.com viral online videos . Muppeteer veteran Bill Barretta has taken over for Henson 's fairly deeper voiced roles , such as the Swedish Chef , Mahna Mahna , Rowlf the Dog , and Dr. Teeth . Guy Smiley , in recent years , has been taken over by Eric Jacobson , and the role of Waldorf , in 1992 , was assumed by Muppet performer veteran Dave Goelz .

On February 17 , 2004 , it was announced that the non @-@ Sesame Street / Fraggle Rock

Muppets ( the Sesame Street characters are separately owned by Sesame Workshop , and the Fraggle Rock characters are still owned by The Jim Henson Company ) and the Bear in the Big Blue House properties had been sold by Henson 's heirs to The Walt Disney Company . However , as a result , Sesame Workshop ( formerly the Children 's Television Workshop ) , also lost the rights to Kermit the Frog , and thus he would not appear on new material on Sesame Street for some time . However , Sesame Workshop has since obtained permission from Disney to use Kermit , allowing him to make an appearance on the premiere of the show 's 40th season on November 10 , 2009 . In addition , Sesame Workshop has made many of Kermit 's previous segments on the show available for viewing on their YouTube account .

One of Henson 's last projects is a show attraction in Walt Disney World and Disneyland featuring the Muppets , called Muppet \* Vision 3D , which opened in 1991 , shortly after his death .

The Jim Henson Company retains the Creature Shop , as well as the rest of its film and television library including Fraggle Rock ( one of the few Muppet @-@ related properties still owned by The Jim Henson Company ) , Farscape , The Dark Crystal , and Labyrinth .

In 2010 , it was announced that the first major biography of Henson , sanctioned by the family and the Jim Henson Legacy , was underway . The biography by Brian Jay Jones was published on September 24 , 2013 , Henson 's 77th birthday .

On February 14 , 2014 , Henson 's son , John Henson , died of a heart attack after playing in the snow with his daughter . He was 48 .

= = = Tributes = = =

Henson is honored both as himself and as Kermit the Frog on the Hollywood Walk of Fame . Only three other people have received this honor : Walt Disney as both himself and Mickey Mouse ; Mel Blanc as both himself and Bugs Bunny ; and Mike Myers as both himself and Shrek . Henson was posthumously inducted into the Walk of Fame in 1991 .

Henson has also earned induction into the Television Hall of Fame . He achieved this honor in 1987 .

The theater at his alma mater , Northwestern High School , in Hyattsville , MD , is named in his honor .

Basil Hears A Noise a CBC special opening with a dedication to him .

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II : The Secret of the Ooze and The Muppet Christmas Carol are both dedicated to him .

Stephen Lynch produced a song titled " Jim Henson 's Dead " , in which he pays homage to many of the characters from The Muppet Show and Sesame Street .

Henson featured in The American Adventure in Epcot at the Walt Disney World Resort .

Philip Roth often quotes Jim Henson in his Sabbath 's Theater as the " great regret " for Mickey Sabbath .

The Jim Henson Museum , located in Leland , Mississippi , features an assortment of original Muppet characters , official certificates from the Mississippi Legislature honoring Henson and his characters , and a statue of Kermit in the middle of the stream behind the museum .

The 1990 television special The Muppets Celebrate Jim Henson allowed the Muppets themselves to pay tribute to Henson . The special featured interviews with Steven Spielberg and others .

Celtic singer , musician , and songwriter Heather Alexander wrote a song titled " Storyteller " in 1990 as a tribute to Jim Henson , which harkens to his " Storyteller " series as well as his role as a modern storyteller .

Tom Smith 's Henson tribute song , " A Boy and His Frog " , won the Pegasus Award for Best Filk Song in 1991 .

Henson was featured in Boyz II Men 's 1991 video , " It 's So Hard to Say Goodbye to Yesterday " .

Episode 2880 of Sesame Street ( which aired on November 15 , 1991 ) was dedicated in his memory , with a memorial card following the closing credits .

The classes of 1994 , 1998 , and 1999 at the University of Maryland , College Park , Henson 's alma mater , commissioned a life @-@ size statue of Henson and Kermit the Frog , which was

dedicated on September 24 , 2003 , [ which would have been ] Henson 's 67th birthday . The statue cost \$ 217 @, @ 000 , and is displayed outside Maryland 's student union . In 2006 , Maryland introduced 50 statues of their school mascot , Testudo the Terrapin , with various designs chosen by different sponsoring groups . Among them was Kertle , a statue by Washington , DC , artist Elizabeth Baldwin , designed to look like Kermit the Frog .

Kermit the Frog was named grand marshal of the 1996 Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena , California .

On the evening of October 25 , 2000 , Comedy Central had a banner sign that said : Jim Henson [ 1936 ? 1990 ] .

In 2003 , Jim Henson was honored at the annual Norsk Høstfest in Minot , North Dakota .

Oury Atlan , Thibaut Berland , and Damien Ferri wrote , directed , and animated a 3D tribute to Henson entitled Over Time that was shown as part of the 2005 Electronic Theater at SIGGRAPH .

On September 28 , 2005 , the U.S. Postal Service issued a sheet of commemorative stamps honoring Henson and the Muppets .

The Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta , Georgia , has acquired more than 700 puppets created by Henson and his studio , including some of the earliest Muppets . Many of these are displayed in the museum exhibit Jim Henson : Puppeteer . In September 2008 , the Center opened Jim Henson : Wonders From His Workshop , highlighting creations from Fraggle Rock , Labyrinth , and other later works .

On August 9 , 2011 , Jim Henson posthumously received the Disney Legends Award . Two of his characters , Kermit the Frog and Rowlf the Dog , performed " Rainbow Connection " in his honor .

On September 24 , 2011 , Leland renamed one of their bridges " The Rainbow Connection " to honor Henson and his work . He was also honored with a Google doodle on his 75th birthday ; the Google logo had six Muppets that were clickable using the " hand " buttons .

= = Muppet performance credits = =

Sam and Friends as Sam , Harry the Hipster , Kermit the Frog , Professor Madcliffe , Omar , Yorick , Pierre the French Rat , and others

Sesame Street as Ernie , Kermit the Frog , Guy Smiley , Dan , Henry , Lance , Captain Vegetable , Mr. Nose , The King , Stan , Harold Happy , Sammy the Snake , and others

Hey Cinderella ! as Kermit the Frog , and others

The Frog Prince as Kermit the Frog , and others

The Muppets Valentine Show as Wally , Kermit the Frog , Rowlf the Dog , Ernie , and others

The Muppet Show : Sex and Violence as Nigel , George Washington , The Swedish Chef , Dr. Teeth , Waldorf , Kermit the Frog , and others

The Muppet Show as Kermit the Frog , Rowlf the Dog , Dr. Teeth , Waldorf , The Swedish Chef , Link Hogthrob , The Newsman , and others

The Muppet Movie as Kermit the Frog , Rowlf the Dog , Dr. Teeth , Waldorf , Swedish Chef , and others

The Great Muppet Caper as Kermit the Frog , Rowlf the Dog , Dr. Teeth , Waldorf , Swedish Chef , The Newsman , and others

The Muppets Take Manhattan as Kermit the Frog , Rowlf the Dog , Dr. Teeth , Waldorf , Swedish Chef , The Newsman , Ernie , and others

Christmas Eve on Sesame Street as Kermit the Frog and Ernie

Emmet Otter 's Jug @-@ Band Christmas as Kermit the Frog , Harvey Beaver , Howard Snake , and Mayor Harrison Fox

Sesame Street Presents Follow That Bird as Ernie and Kermit the Frog

Fraggle Rock as Cantus the Minstrel and Convincing John

Big Bird in China as Ernie

Little Muppet Monsters as Kermit the Frog ( live @-@ action puppet only ) , Dr. Teeth

The Tale of the Bunny Picnic as the Dog

The Muppets : A Celebration of 30 Years as Kermit the Frog , Rowlf the Dog , Dr. Teeth , Waldorf ,



The Swedish Chef , Link Hogthrob , Ernie , Harry the Hipster , and others

The Christmas Toy as Jack @-@ in @-@ the @-@ Box and Kermit the Frog

A Muppet Family Christmas as Kermit the Frog , Rowlf the Dog , Dr. Teeth , Waldorf , Swedish Chef , The Newsman , Ernie , Guy Smiley , Baby Kermit , Baby Rowlf , and others

Sing @-@ Along , Dance @-@ Along , Do @-@ Along as Rowlf the Dog , Penguins , and Kermit the Frog

Sesame Street : 20 and Still Counting as Ernie , Kermit the Frog , and others

The Muppets at Walt Disney World as Kermit the Frog , Rowlf the Dog , Dr. Teeth , Waldorf , Link Hogthrob , and The Swedish Chef

Muppet \* Vision 3D as Kermit the Frog , Waldorf , The Swedish Chef , Link Hogthrob , Rowlf the Dog , and others

= = Archive = =

The moving image collection of Jim Henson is held at the Academy Film Archive . The collection contains the film work of Jim Henson and the Jim Henson Company .