

= Sam Simon =

Samuel Michael " Sam " Simon (June 6 , 1955 ? March 8 , 2015) was an American director , producer , writer , animal rights activist , boxing manager , tournament poker player , and philanthropist , most noted as co @-@ creator of the television series The Simpsons .

While at Stanford University , Simon worked as a newspaper cartoonist and after graduating became a storyboard artist at Filmation Studios . Simon submitted a spec script for the sitcom Taxi , which was produced , and he later became the series ' showrunner . Over the next few years , Simon wrote and produced for Cheers , It 's Garry Shandling 's Show and other programs , as well as writing the 1991 film The Super .

In 1989 , Simon developed the animated sitcom The Simpsons with Matt Groening and James L. Brooks . Simon assembled the show 's first writing team , co @-@ wrote eight episodes and has been credited with " developing [the show 's] sensibility " . Simon 's relationship with Groening was strained and he left the show in 1993 , negotiating a pay @-@ off which saw him receive tens of millions of dollars from the show 's revenue each year . The following year Simon co @-@ created The George Carlin Show , before later working as a director on shows such as The Drew Carey Show . Simon won nine Primetime Emmy Awards for his television work .

Simon turned to fields outside television in his later years . Simon regularly appeared on Howard Stern 's radio shows , managed boxer Lamon Brewster and helped guide Lamon to the World Boxing Organization Heavyweight Championship in 2004 and was a regular poker player and six @-@ time in the money finisher at the World Series of Poker . Simon founded the The Sam Simon Foundation , which consists of a mobile veterinary clinic that goes into low @-@ income neighborhoods offering free surgeries for cats and dogs several days per week , as well as a program that rescues and trains shelter dogs . He also funded the self @-@ christened Sea Shepherd Conservation Society vessel the MY Sam Simon . Simon was engaged at the time of his death , having been previously twice married , including to the actress Jennifer Tilly . Following a profile of Simon on 60 Minutes in 2007 , CBS writer Daniel Schorn wrote in an online article that Simon was " perhaps the Renaissance man of the baffling , uncertain age we live in . "

Simon was diagnosed with terminal colorectal cancer in 2012 and given only three to six months to live . Simon died on March 8 , 2015 . He bequeathed his \$ 100M estate to various charities which he actively supported during his lifetime .

= = Early life = =

Simon was born Samuel Michael Simon on June 6 , 1955 in Los Angeles , California , United States . He grew up in Beverly Hills and Malibu . Simon 's family lived opposite Groucho Marx . Simon 's father was a cheap clothing manufacturer and was of Estonian Jewish heritage . Simon had a childhood which has been described as " comfortable " and " privileged " . Although his parents wanted Simon to become a lawyer , Simon was interested in art from a young age , appearing on televised local art programs at the age of five . He once was told by Walt Disney that he would one day work at his studio .

Simon attended Beverly Hills High School , where he was on the football team and served as a cartoonist for the school newspaper . He was awarded " Most Humorous " and " Most Talented " in his senior yearbook . He later attended Stanford University , graduating in 1977 . Simon had not wished to attend college , but Stanford persuaded him to apply due to his sufficient grades and proficiency at football ; Simon quit the football team after one day . Simon drew comics for the college newspaper , but was denied admission to a drawing class for not being talented enough . As he recalled to the Stanford alumni magazine , he was told , ? You ? d be taking the space of a student who has talent . ? Simon majored in psychology , but did not focus on his academics .

= = Career = =

== Early career ==

While still at Stanford , Simon 's first job was a newspaper sports cartoonist for The San Francisco Chronicle and The San Francisco Examiner . After graduating , he worked as a television storyboard artist , and later a writer , at Filmmation Studios . There he worked on several animated shows , including The New Adventures of Mighty Mouse and Heckle & Jeckle and Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids (1979) . Simon recalls Filmmation approving of his work because he was " self @-@ taught and unschooled , " but Simon felt the majority of what the studio produced was " awful " . On the suggestion of Filmmation producer Lou Scheimer who was impressed by Simon 's writing ability , Simon submitted a spec script for the series Taxi which was produced and aired in 1981 during its third season . Simon was hired as a writer , quickly becoming showrunner for its fifth and final season in 1983 . Simon next worked as a writer and producer on Cheers from seasons one to three (1982 ? 1985) , writing five episodes : " Endless Slumper " , " Battle of the Ex 's " , " Fairytales Can Come True " , " Cheerio Cheers " and " The Bartender 's Tale " . Simon created , wrote and produced the short @-@ lived sitcom Shaping Up in 1984 , alongside Ken Estin ; the show starred Leslie Nielsen as a gym owner and ran for five episodes on ABC . Simon also wrote and produced for Best of the West (1981) , Barney Miller (1982) and It 's Garry Shandling 's Show (1987 ? 1988) , and wrote the 1991 film The Super .

== The Simpsons ==

Simon co @-@ developed the animated series The Simpsons , which premiered on the Fox network in 1989 and has remained on air ever since . The show is regarded as one of the greatest television shows of all time , with Time magazine naming it the 20th century 's best series . The premise for the series originated as a series of short cartoons airing in 1987 as part of The Tracey Ullman Show , on which Simon was a writer and executive producer alongside James L. Brooks , with whom Simon had worked on Taxi . The cartoons were developed into a full series two years later . For The Simpsons , Simon served alongside Matt Groening (who conceived the show and the five main characters) and Brooks as executive producer and showrunner for the show 's first (1989 ? 1990) and second (1990 ? 1991) seasons , and was creative supervisor for the first four seasons . He assembled and led the initial team of writers , consisting of John Swartzwelder , Jon Vitti , George Meyer , Jeff Martin , Al Jean , Mike Reiss , Jay Kogen and Wallace Wolodarsky .

Simon has been credited with " developing [the show 's] sensibility " . Former Simpsons director Brad Bird has described him as " the unsung hero " of the show , while Vitti has stated to " leave out Sam Simon " is to tell " the managed version " of The Simpsons ' history , because " he was the guy we wrote for . " Writer Ken Levine called Simon " the real creative force behind The Simpsons ... The tone , the storytelling , the level of humor ? that was all developed on Sam 's watch . " Levine says that Simon " brought a level of honesty to the characters " and made them " three @-@ dimensional " , adding that his " comedy is all about character , not just a string of gags . In The Simpsons , the characters are motivated by their emotions and their foibles . ' What are they thinking ? ' ? that is Sam 's contribution . The stories come from the characters . " Simon crafted much of the world of Springfield and designed the models for many of the show 's recurring characters , including Mr. Burns , Dr. Hibbert , Chief Wiggum and Eddie and Lou , as well as many of the one @-@ time and guest star roles , such as Bleeding Gums Murphy . One of his contributions to the show 's character development was his proposal that Waylon Smithers should be gay , but that this should never have too much attention drawn to it ; Smithers ' sexuality became one of the show 's longest @-@ running gags . Simon saw The Simpsons as a chance to solve " what [he] didn 't like about the Saturday @-@ morning cartoon shows [he had] worked on ... [he] wanted all the actors in a room together , not reading their lines separated from each other . The Simpsons would have been a great radio show . If you just listen to the sound track , it works . "

The Simpsons utilized a process of collaborative script re @-@ writing by the show 's whole writing staff ; this meant the credited writer may not have been responsible for the majority of an episode 's content . Nevertheless , Simon was credited with co @-@ writing the season one episodes " The

Telltale Head " , " The Crepes of Wrath " and the season finale " Some Enchanted Evening " . " Some Enchanted Evening " was intended to be the show 's premiere but was delayed due to poor animation . Simon adapted Edgar Allan Poe 's The Raven for the third segment of the season two episode " Treehouse of Horror " . Groening was nervous about " The Raven " because it did not have many gags , and felt it would be " the worst , most pretentious thing [they had] ever done " on the show . Nevertheless , the segment has often been praised as one of the best Treehouse of Horror stories in the show 's history . Ryan J. Budke of TV Squad described the segment as " one of the most refined Simpsons pop references ever " and knows " people that consider this the point that they realized The Simpsons could be both highly hilarious and highly intelligent . " Simon co @-@ wrote the episode " Two Cars in Every Garage and Three Eyes on Every Fish " with Swartzwelder , an episode which Tom Shales of the Washington Post has described as " a bull 's @-@ eye political satire " . The final episode he co @-@ wrote for season two was " The Way We Was " , alongside Jean and Reiss . While Reiss and Jean took over as showrunners , Simon remained on the writing staff for seasons three (1991 ? 1992) and four (1992 ? 1993) . For the third season he co @-@ wrote " Treehouse of Horror II " , and conceived the story for the Sideshow Bob episode " Black Widower " , together with mystery author Thomas Chastain , hoping to construct a full mystery story ; Vitti wrote the episode 's teleplay . Simon also substantially contributed to the episode " Stark Raving Dad " , pitched the episode " Homer at the Bat " , and proposed the " Land of Chocolate " sequence from " Burns Verkaufen der Kraftwerk " . Simon 's final writing credit was for the " Dial ' Z ' For Zombies " segment of " Treehouse of Horror III " .

Although they initially worked well together , Simon and Groening 's relationship became " very contentious " according to Groening . Simon never expected the show to be a success , often proclaiming to fellow staff members " We 're thirteen and out " ? meaning that the show would be canceled after the thirteen episodes of the first season . Therefore , he also told the staff that they had creative freedom to do whatever they wanted to make The Simpsons as good a show as possible , regardless of network or public opinion , because he thought it inevitably would not be renewed ; he elaborated in 2009 that " really I was saying that to take the pressure off of everyone . I was just saying let 's just go out and make 13 episodes that are really good and really funny . " However , Groening interpreted it as meaning Simon was uncommitted and did not care whether the show was a success or not , as Simon 's career would survive , whereas his own would not . In 2001 , Groening described Simon as " brilliantly funny and one of the smartest writers I 've ever worked with , although unpleasant and mentally unbalanced . " According to John Ortved 's book The Simpsons : An Uncensored , Unauthorized History , when the show became successful Simon resented the media attention Groening received , particularly the praise for the show 's writing ; Simon felt that Groening 's involvement was limited , and that he should have been the one receiving credit for the show . Simon later spoke well of Groening 's influence , particularly on the show 's positive tone .

As well as Groening , Simon was often at odds with Brooks and production company Gracie Films . While working on The Simpsons , he and Brooks had co @-@ created the series Sibs (1991) and Phenom (1993) as part of a multi @-@ series deal for ABC . Simon did not want to work on either series , both of which were poorly received and swiftly canceled , which put a strain on the pair 's relationship .

Simon left Gracie Films and The Simpsons in 1993 . Simon commented that he " wasn 't enjoying it anymore , " wished to pursue other projects , and " that any show I 've ever worked on , it turns me into a monster . I go crazy . I hate myself . " Before leaving , he negotiated a deal that saw him receive a share of the show 's profits every year , particularly from home media , and an executive producer credit despite not having worked on the show since 1993 . The deal means he made over \$ 10 million a year from The Simpsons ; he later told Stanford Magazine that " tens of millions " was a closer figure . Simon commented : " When I was there I thought I was underpaid . I thought I wasn 't getting enough credit for it . Now , I think it 's completely the opposite . I get too much credit for it . And the money is ridiculous . "

= = = Subsequent media work = = =

In January 1994 , Simon co @-@ created with comedian George Carlin the sitcom The George Carlin Show for Fox . It aired for 27 episodes before being canceled in December 1995 . Simon served as showrunner throughout its run and directed several episodes . Simon persuaded Carlin to do the show after writing it as something which would not be " typically sitcomy . " He conceived the show as what Carlin 's life would have been like had he never become a comedian ; Carlin played a heavy drinking New York taxi driver . Simon commented : " When I was doing The Simpsons , people couldn 't see how smart it was because of the low moments . There 's something about this show . People who like it say it 's classy . They don 't see how vulgar it is . " Carlin wrote negatively of his relationship with Simon . On his own website , Carlin wrote of the show : " always check mental health of creative partner beforehand . Loved the actors , loved the crew . Had a great time . Couldn 't wait to get the fuck out of there . " In his final book , the posthumously published Last Words (2009) , Carlin elaborated : " I had a great time . I never laughed so much , so often , so hard as I did with cast members Alex Rocco , Chris Rich , Tony Starke . There was a very strange , very good sense of humor on that stage ... The biggest problem , though , was that Sam Simon was a fucking horrible person to be around . Very , very funny , extremely bright and brilliant , but an unhappy person who treated other people poorly . " Simon described himself as " combative " and said that most people see him as having a " bad attitude " .

In the late 1990s , Simon primarily worked as a director . He directed on the American adaptation of the sitcom Men Behaving Badly in 1996 , the Friends season three episode " The One Without the Ski Trip " in 1997 , and several episodes of The Norm Show (1999) and The Michael Richards Show (2000) . From 1998 to 2003 , he served as a consulting producer and director for The Drew Carey Show , and directed the show 's series finale . He was also a creative consultant on Bless This House in 1996 .

After leaving The Simpsons and The George Carlin Show , Simon sought to find a " life outside television , " as working in the industry " made [him] crazy . " On working in television , Simon concluded : " In some ways , it 's the greatest job in the world . You make a product that 's given away , and all it does is make people smile . Nobody gets hurt , there 's no damage , and you can get crazy rich . " Simon retired from full @-@ time television work , although still worked in the media , frequently contributing , as a writer and a participant , to Howard Stern 's radio shows . He wrote and directed the one @-@ off radio sitcom " The Bitter Half " for Stern 's Howard 101 in 2006 . Simon had his own show on Radioio . Simon returned to television production work in 2012 , serving as a consultant and director on the series Anger Management for half a day a week .

= = = Other ventures = = =

Simon was a staunch advocate for animal rights . Starting in 2002 , Simon self @-@ funded , at an annual cost of several million dollars , The Sam Simon Foundation , which has a mobile clinic that provides free surgeries for cats and dogs , as well as rescuing and retraining shelter dogs who might otherwise be euthanized . An episode of 60 Minutes broadcast in March 2007 described it as " the grandest dog shelter in the country , a five star , [6 acres (0 @. @ 024 km2 ; 0 @. @ 0094 sq mi)] spread in Malibu , perhaps the most desirable real estate on the planet . Here , among the waterfalls and the manicured grounds , The Sam Simon Foundation gives stray and abandoned dogs a new lease on life , literally . "

As Simon explained , the foundation aims to " rescue dogs " and " train them to be service dogs , [to help] people with disabilities , " primarily the deaf . It also provides free veterinary surgeries to pets belonging to low @-@ income families , and trains dogs to help soldiers returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan deal with post @-@ traumatic stress disorder . Simon said the money he used was " well spent just for the pleasure it gives me . " The training program has a 20 % success rate , because many of the rescued dogs " have physical and psychological problems " but the dogs who cannot be trained are put up for adoption . The foundation is non @-@ profit , does not accept public donations , but does receive some federal government funding due to a bill written and passed by Senator Al Franken . In 2011 , Simon established and self @-@ funded the Sam Simon

Foundation Feeding Families program , a food truck which delivers vegan food to low @-@ income families ; the program helps feed some 200 families per week . He donated an undisclosed sum to the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society in 2012 for the purpose of purchasing another vessel for their fleet , the MY Sam Simon , which was unveiled in December 2012 . Simon was also a board member for Save the Children , and hosted the largest annual fundraiser for PETA , who named him an Honorary Director and their Norfolk , Virginia headquarters building after him . Simon has stated that animal rights charities have been his main target for donations , over other causes like human disease and environmental damage , because " your money can bring success " with visible results . Simon stated in 2011 that there is " nothing [which gives him] more pleasure than " helping others via his charities , and gave away most of his fortune .

Simon was a long time fan of boxing , attending fights with his grandfather , but his interest increased particularly after seeing the 1990 heavyweight championship fight between Evander Holyfield and James " Buster " Douglas which he described as " the most electrifying feeling I 'd had in my life . " He began training and won six out of nine amateur fights ; he was also a reserve contestant on the Fox series Celebrity Boxing . Simon was for eight years the manager of heavyweight boxer Lamon Brewster , the now @-@ retired former World Boxing Organization heavyweight champion . He met Brewster in 1997 and began managing him , helping him rise to the top of the WBO rankings . He considers guiding Brewster to his April 2004 victory over Wladimir Klitschko to win the vacant WBO Heavyweight Championship , with Klitschko the heavy favorite , to be amongst the greatest moments of his life ; it " eclipsed everything he had achieved in a glittering 26 @-@ year showbiz career . " Before the Klitschko fight , Simon calculated he had spent several hundred thousand dollars funding Brewster , paying him a large salary on top of match fees as well as letting him stay rent @-@ free at one of his houses , and taking only a 10 % cut of the match fees ; however , he never intended boxing to be a substantial " source of revenue " . Simon retired from boxing management soon after Brewster became WBO Heavyweight Champion .

Simon was a regular poker player , and Texas hold ' em in particular . He was introduced to the game as a child through weekly family poker games and casino trips with his grandfather . Simon did not consider himself a serious player until a game at writer David Steinberg 's house with several " scholarly " players , which encouraged him to study the game and enter numerous tournaments , although he decided not to become professional . He competed at the World Series of Poker (WSOP) each year between 2007 and 2011 , finishing in the money in six events . In 2007 , at the 6 @, @ 358 @-@ player \$ 10 @, @ 000 No @-@ Limit Texas Hold 'em Main Event , he finished 329th with \$ 39 @, @ 445 . He also finished 16th winning \$ 35 @, @ 493 at the \$ 1 @, @ 000 1 @, @ 048 @-@ player No @-@ Limit Hold 'em w / Re @-@ Buys in 2007 , 41st winning \$ 10 @, @ 708 at the \$ 1 @, @ 000 706 @-@ player No @-@ Limit Hold 'em w / ReBuys in 2008 , 53rd winning \$ 10 @, @ 692 at the \$ 1 @, @ 000 879 @-@ player No @-@ Limit Hold 'em w / ReBuys in 2008 , 20th winning \$ 24 @, @ 066 at the \$ 10 @, @ 000 275 @-@ player World Championship Pot @-@ Limit Hold 'em in 2009 , and 500th winning \$ 23 @, @ 876 at the \$ 10 @, @ 000 6 @, @ 865 @-@ player No @-@ Limit Hold 'em Championship in 2011 . He also won the \$ 300 438 @-@ player No @-@ Limit Hold 'em Bounty \$ 100 @, @ 000 Guarantee at the 2009 L.A. Poker Open , winning \$ 22 @, @ 228 . His biggest win in terms of both field size and prize money was the \$ 200 1 @, @ 082 @-@ player No @-@ Limit Hold 'em \$ 150 @, @ 000 Guarantee at the 2010 Winnin O ' The Green , where he won \$ 57 @, @ 308 . Simon 's private poker games between him and his celebrity friends have been described as " raucous and very entertaining " . Their reputation led Playboy TV to produce the show Sam 's Game , a televised version featuring Simon as host and master of ceremonies of a Las Vegas celebrity Texas Hold ' em match ; he produced the show . He had previously appeared on a 2009 episode of High Stakes Poker .

= = Awards = =

Simon won nine Primetime Emmy Awards and received ten further nominations for his work . For The Tracey Ullman Show he won the Emmys for Outstanding Variety , Music Or Comedy Series in 1989 and Outstanding Writing In A Variety Or Music Program in 1990 . In the former he was

nominated again in 1990 , for the latter he was also nominated in 1987 , 1988 and 1989 . He received the Emmy for Outstanding Animated Program (for Programming Less Than One Hour) for The Simpsons in 1990 , 1991 , 1995 , 1997 , 1998 , 2000 and 2001 with further nominations in 1990 (for " Simpsons Roasting on an Open Fire " which was counted as a separate special) , 1992 , 1996 , 1999 and 2002 . He was nominated for Outstanding Comedy Series for Taxi in 1983 and Cheers in 1985 , Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series for It 's Garry Shandling 's Show in 1988 and Outstanding Variety , Music Or Comedy Special for The Best of Tracey Ullman Show in 1990 . He also won a Peabody Award for The Simpsons in 1996 . In 2013 , Simon was awarded the Writers Guild of America Award Animation Writers Caucus lifetime achievement award for his work in animation ; the following year the WGA awarded him the Valentine Davies Award for his humanitarian and philanthropic efforts .

= = Personal life = =

Simon was married to actress Jennifer Tilly from 1984 to 1991 and remained friends with her . He married Playboy Playmate Jami Ferrell in 2000 , and the marriage lasted three weeks . Simon was engaged to chef and caterer Jenna Stewart around 2011 . He was dating Kate Porter , a make @-@ up artist , from 2012 until his death . Simon had three dogs , supported the Democratic Party , and was vegan .

He lived in Pacific Palisades , Los Angeles , in the restored Bailey House , designed by Richard Neutra . After his home was destroyed by a fire in 2007 , Simon redesigned it to be environmentally friendly ; much of the interior is constructed from recycled materials while solar panels provide virtually its entire power needs . The building has a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold certificate . He had an extensive art collection ; he owned paintings by Thomas Hart Benton , John Singer Sargent and one of the original casts of Auguste Rodin 's The Thinker . He also had a sculpture by Robert Graham and works by Alberto Vargas , Gil Elvgren , Ed Ruscha and Richard Estes .

= = Illness and death = =

In late 2012 , Simon was diagnosed with terminal colorectal cancer which later metastasized to his other organs , including his liver and kidneys . He had been feeling ill for some time and had earlier been misdiagnosed . He was given between three and six months to live ; chemotherapy treatment reduced the size of his tumors over the following six months . He arranged for his fortune to be left to various charitable causes , stating " The truth is , I have more money than I 'm interested in spending . Everyone in my family is taken care of . And I enjoy this . " Simon died in his Los Angeles home from complications from the disease on March 8 , 2015 , aged 59 . His remains were interred at Westwood Village Memorial Park Cemetery in Los Angeles .

Controversy surrounds the management of his trust , and the lack of donations to groups which he generously supported in his lifetime .

= = Credits = =