

From Springfield, Missouri

Bob Barker—The most popular game show host of all times

Robert William Barker (born December 12, 1923) is an American former television game show host. He is best known for hosting CBS's *The Price Is Right* from 1972 to 2007, making it the longest running daytime game show in American television history, and for hosting *Truth or Consequences* from 1956 to 1974.

Barker was born in Darrington, Washington, and spent most of his youth on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota. The U.S. Indian Census Rolls, 1885–1940, list Barker as an official member of the Sioux tribe. His mother was a school teacher; his father, Byron John Barker, was the foreman on the electrical line through the state of Washington. While in Washington, his father fell from a tower and sustained an injury which resulted in his death in 1929. In 1931, the family moved to Springfield, Missouri, where Barker graduated from Central High School in 1941.

While in high school, Barker worked as a bell hop at the old Taneycomo Hotel in Rockaway Beach.¹

Barker attended Drury College (now Drury University) in Springfield, on a basketball scholarship. He was a member of the Epsilon Beta Chapter of Sigma Nu fraternity at Drury. On the outbreak of World War II, Barker served in the United States Navy as a fighter pilot. However, the war ended before he was assigned to a seagoing squadron. After the war, he returned to Drury to finish his education, graduating summa cum laude with a degree in economics.

Barker started hosting *Truth or Consequences* on December 31, 1956 and continued with the program until 1974. The idea was to mix the original quiz



While attending college at Drury, Barker worked his first “media job,” at KTTS Radio, in Springfield.

element of game shows with wacky stunts. On the show, people had to answer a trivia question correctly (usually an off-the-wall question that no one would be able to answer correctly) before “Beulah the Buzzer” was sounded. If the contestant did not complete the “truth” portion, there was a “consequence,” usually a zany and embarrassing stunt. If the contestant answered the question, invariably, the question had a second part. In addition, during Barker’s run as host, “Barker’s Box” was played. Barker’s Box was a box with four drawers in it. If a contestant was able to pick all three drawers with money inside before picking the empty drawer, they won a bonus prize.

It was on *Truth or Consequences* that the salute became his trademark sign-off; he ended each episode with “Bob Barker saying goodbye, and hoping all your consequences are happy ones!”

On September 4, 1972, Barker began hosting *The Price Is Right*. In the thirty-five years of hosting, Barker became far more associated with the series than first host Bill Cullen was with the 1956–65 original. In 2006, *The Price Is Right* marked its thirty-fifth consecutive year on the air. It is the longest running game show of all time in North America, and at the time was the last surviving show in the daytime game show genre, having survived (at the time) twelve years after its last competitor had been canceled.

When his wife Dorothy Jo died in 1981 of lung cancer, Barker became an advocate for animal rights and of animal-rights activism, supporting groups such as the United Activists for Animal Rights and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. In 2007, Barker retired from hosting *The Price Is Right* after celebrating his fifty-year career on television. Barker and Dorothy Jo had no children and he has not remarried.

¹ Bob Barker, *Priceless Memories* (Hachette Book Group) p 81.

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“Bob Barker saying goodbye, and hoping all your consequences are happy ones!”



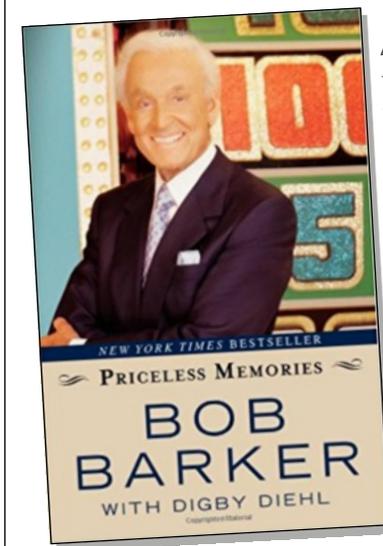
Senior Moments Book Review



Priceless Memories

Bob Barker Fans: Come on Down!

In front of the camera, he has been invited into the homes of millions of Americans as host of *The Price Is Right*, *Truth or Consequences*, *Miss USA*, *Miss Universe*, *The Rose Parade*, and many other programs and specials. Now Bob Barker shares stories of favorite contestants, episodes, celebrity encounters, and behind-the-scenes happenings.



His memoir, *Priceless Memories*, written with Digby Diehl, provides a backstage pass to the shows that made him a household name. From being raised on a Native American reservation by a single mother through The Great Depression and the Dust Bowl, to training as a pilot in the Navy during World War II, through his romance with the love of his life and high school sweetheart, Dorothy Jo, and his success at retirement.

His support of animal rights has always been a central part of his life. Bob delves into stories of how he has taken on Hollywood and the government in his crusade, including his anti-fur stand-off with beauty pageants, his involvement in uncovering animal abuse in movies and television, and the legislation he helped to pass. He also shares stories of rescuing animals, from dogs to elephants.

For the innumerable fans who have welcomed Bob into their homes over the last fifty years, this book will be like catching up with a dear and familiar friend who continues to lead a full and endlessly interesting life. In memory of his wife and his mother Tilly, who was also devoted to animals, Barker established the DJ & T Foundation, which has contributed millions to spay/neuter programs. Barker, who never had children, is also leaving a legacy of university endowments for the study of animal rights, and is himself active in animal rights legislation. He may no longer be in front of the cameras, but Bob Barker hasn't stopped working.

This book review is from Hachette Book Group)