

From Marceline, Missouri

Walt Disney, film producer, animator, and international icon

Walter Elias “Walt” Disney (December 5, 1901 – December 15, 1966) was an American film producer, director, screenwriter, voice actor, animator, entrepreneur, entertainer, international icon, and philanthropist. Along with his brother Roy O. Disney, he was co-founder of Walt Disney Productions, which later became one of the best-known motion picture producers in the world. The corporation is now known as The Walt Disney Company and had an annual revenue of approximately US\$36 billion in the 2010 financial year.

Disney is particularly noted as a film producer and a popular showman, as well as an innovator in animation and theme park design. He and his staff created some of the world's most well-known fictional characters including Mickey Mouse, for whom Disney himself provided the original voice.

In 1878, Disney’s father Elias had moved from Huron County, Ontario, Canada to the United States at first seeking gold in California before finally settling down to farm with his parents near Ellis, Kansas, until 1884. The family moved to Chicago, Illinois, in 1890. In 1906, when Walt was four, Elias and his family moved to a farm in **Marceline, Missouri**, where his brother Roy had recently purchased farmland. In Marceline, Disney developed his love for drawing with one of the family’s neighbors, a retired doctor named “Doc” Sherwood, paying him to draw pictures of Sherwood’s horse, Rupert. His interest in trains also developed in Marceline, a town that owed its existence to the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway which ran through it. Walt would put his ear to the tracks in anticipation of the coming train then try and spot his uncle, engineer Michael Martin, conducting the train.

In 1917, Elias acquired shares in the O-Zell jelly factory in Chicago and moved his family back to the city, where in the fall Disney began his freshman year at McKinley High School and took night courses at the Chicago Art Institute. He became the cartoonist for the school newspaper, drawing patriotic topics and focusing on World War I. Despite dropping out of high school at the age of sixteen to join the army, Disney was rejected for being underage.

After his rejection by the army, Walt and a friend decided to join the Red Cross. Soon after joining he was sent to France for a year, where he drove an ambulance, but only after the armistice was signed on November 11, 1918.

During his lifetime he received four honorary Academy Awards and won 22 Academy Awards from a total of 59 nominations, including a record four in one year, giving him more awards and nominations than any other individual in history. Disney also won seven Emmy Awards and gave his name to the Disneyland and Walt Disney World Resort theme parks in the U.S., as well as the international resorts Tokyo Disney Resort, Disneyland Paris, and Hong Kong Disneyland.

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