

Doris Day, Founder and President

Doris Day is one of the world's most-loved and most-honored women. Although it has been decades since she last starred in a motion picture, her name continues to top the "most-admired" lists and polls, and her movies are among the most-popular on television and DVD.

Doris Day made 39 films, beginning in 1948, with "Romance on the High Seas." She also had two television series, "The Doris Day Show" for CBS (1969-1973), and "Doris Day's Best Friends," which ran on CBN Cable Network/Family Channel in 1985 and 1986.

Scores of scripts and movie, television and singing offers continue to be submitted to Doris Day, and she jokes that she might decide to make a movie, "Just to take a rest." In 1998, the Arts & Entertainment television network produced a two-hour special for its "Biography" series, which brought the network some of its highest ratings ever. A 1991 PBS special, "Doris Day: A Sentimental Journey," also produced large audiences.

Today, Doris Day's full-time career is her work with animals, and her non-profit organizations, the Doris Day Animal Foundation (established in 1998) and the Doris Day Animal League (which recently merged with The Humane Society of the United States).

The Doris Day Animal Foundation, which pioneered such landmark projects as "Spay Day USA" – responsible for more than a million-and-a-half spays and neuters -- is returning to its roots to "help animals and the people who love them." The organization will be helping to fund other non-profit, public service projects not aimed at goals like passing legislation, but at helping other non-profit (501(c)(3)) groups who need help in their work caring for and protecting animals.

Each year, from 1948 until 1964, Doris Day was listed among the top ten box office attractions -- the longest run of any female star in motion picture history. In 1989, she was honored with the Cecil B. DeMille Lifetime Achievement Award from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association for her work over the years, and in 1991, she was given the Lifetime Achievement Award by the American Comedy Awards. Called "the most underrated star of all time, since she could do so much and make it all look so easy," the range of Doris Day's work was without peer. She could sing and dance and act in films as different from each other as "Calamity Jane" and "Love Me Or Leave Me," while playing everyone's dream girl next door, to the career women she portrayed in comedies such as "Pillow Talk," "Lover Come Back" and "The Thrill of It All."

Her co-stars in films included Clark Gable ("Teacher's Pet"), James Cagney ("Love Me Or Leave Me" and "The West Point Story"), Rock Hudson ("Pillow Talk," "Send Me No Flowers" and "Lover Come Back"), James Stewart ("The Man Who Knew Too Much"),

Frank Sinatra ("Young At Heart"), Jack Lemmon ("It Happened To Jane"), Rex Harrison ("Midnight Lace"), Cary Grant ("That Touch of Mink"), Jimmy Durante ("Jumbo"), David Niven ("Please Don't Eat the Daisies"), and many others.

Doris Day did not set out to become an actress. She wanted to be a dancer, but an auto accident put a stop to those plans. While recovering, she began singing, and, as a teenager, was singing with some of the best of the Big Bands. Her breakthrough was in 1944 when Les Brown brought her the song, "Sentimental Journey." The song became one of the biggest-sellers for decades, topping the charts at number one for nine weeks, and a movie career soon followed. Her other hit songs over the years have included "Que Sera Sera," which won an Academy Award in 1956, "It's Magic," "Teacher's Pet," "Everybody Loves A Lover," her first song to earn a Grammy nomination, and "Secret Love," which also won an Academy Award in 1953.

The question asked most often is why Doris Day is so involved in animal welfare issues. She explains:

"The story of 'Tiny,' my dog, always stays in my mind. His companionship was invaluable when I was a teenager and was in a car accident with a train that resulted in a compound leg fracture. I was on crutches for more than a year. He never left my side, understood my moods and gave me the kind of companionship that only a dog can bestow.

"It was during this time that I began a lifelong love affair with dogs, a sentiment known only to dog lovers and, cat lovers too. Their affection and caring is a relief from tensions and anxiety. Tiny used to walk beside me on the pavement as I eased myself along on my crutches. One day, for no reason, he scampered away from me and into the street. Tiny was hit by a car and killed instantly. From that day forward I always felt deeply and passionately about dogs needing to be on leashes when in the street."

That lesson has resulted in one of the most active animal welfare volunteer efforts in history. Now, with giant successes over the past few years, the Doris Day Animal Foundation will help where its help can be used most. The organization will not be accepting applications for grants or other fund-raising requests. Because of Doris Day's longtime involvement in animal welfare, DDAF is aware of so many places where its help is already needed, and that's where the foundation will be headed.

Even though Doris continues to be recognized for her entertainment career – including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2004 from President George W. Bush and a Lifetime Grammy Award in 2008, the animals are the "stars" in Doris Day's world, and she couldn't be happier about it.