

Walt Disney And the American Dream

WALT DISNEY WAS AN AMERICAN ICON, who personified the best of America with his films, television shows and theme parks. He represented beauty, kindness and inspiration to an increasingly troubled world; and his avuncular presence brought comfort and joy to the lives of Americans and others around the world. If there can be any true measure of positive human achievement in the 20th century, then Disney, an entrepreneur of unparalleled creative genius, would surely go down as one of the greatest.

BY MERLIN MILLER

Generations have been favorably impacted by Walt Disney's heartwarming and classic works, and by the positive and innovative examples he set. He was this writer's idol, and had fate delivered me to his era, I would have been at his doorstep, seeking his mentorship, in service to his world. But it was not to be, for I was still a kid when he died, Dec. 15, 1966. Although I worked a few years later as an usher in a theater that always played the Disney films, I knew that the magic had died too.

While Walt's name nostalgically lingers on, the company that he built has largely abandoned the principles and values that he stood for, and has instead joined the ranks of Hollywood's materialistic purveyors of crass and decadent entertainment. Each year there are fewer exceptions to this disturbing reality. Walt would be more than disappointed, but not surprised. He knew his enemies and their insatiable appetite for subverting the dreams of others. But Walt left us an incredible legacy of stories, characters and wonderworks—and challenged us to make this a better world. Accordingly, he developed five guiding principles to make dreams come true: 1) think "tomorrow"; 2) free the imag-

ination; 3) strive for lasting quality; 4) have "stick-to-it-ivity"; and 5) have fun.

Walt was born Dec. 5, 1901, before the creation of the Federal Reserve and the IRS, and before the numbering of wars. Walt's father was Irish-Canadian and his mother German-American. Life was not easy for the Disney family, and they relocated as job opportunities dictated. But growing up in the Midwest shaped Walt's values and gave him a "Pollyanna"-Americana perspective. His formative years were spent in Marceline, Missouri, and many of his later inspirations came from those simple, but wonderful experiences of living on "Main Street," but also near fields and forests, rivers and trains and farm animals. It was there that his love for drawing began.

During World War I, Walt tried to enlist but was still a minor, so he joined the Red Cross as an ambulance driver, serving in France. Upon his return, he went to Kansas City, Missouri, where he worked as a commercial artist. There he improved his cartooning skills, met other artists and formed his own ventures—producing live-action and animated shorts. After limited successes and failures, Walt eventually migrated to Hollywood, partnering with his brother Roy and his friend Ub Iwerks, of Frisian ancestry. The next several years were tumultuous, and his successes

did not come easy. His short films were very popular, but distributors cheated him on returns and even stole his characters and, at times, his animators. Walt struggled throughout his career, but especially during those early years.

Many people imagine that the movie industry was a Jewish creation. In actuality, Thomas Edison (of Dutch ancestry) was the inventor of the motion picture camera and through his “trust” (the Motion Picture Patents Company or MPPC, also known as the Edison Trust) began to organize the burgeoning new business. Creative directors, exemplified by David Llewellyn W. Griffith (of Welsh ancestry), captured the public’s fascination with quality films, and the future looked bright. Jewish merchants, recognizing the potential, scrambled for a piece of the action and became notorious for circumventing payments to the trust.

Through their “Nickelodeon” theaters, they built their own distribution networks and grew rapidly, concentrating on showing racy and exploitative material. They moved production to Hollywood, primarily to escape paying royalties to Edison’s trust. In time, and with felonious tactics, they prevailed; but did not yet have a stranglehold on the industry.

Walt’s big break came with his creation of the Mickey Mouse character in 1928, after which his independence, and fame, steadily grew. [Originally Disney created “Oswald the Lucky Rabbit,” in 1927; this morphed into “Mortimer” Mouse in 1928, whose name was changed to Mickey Mouse, perhaps to please Mrs. Disney.—Ed.]

No longer trusting the New York or Hollywood distributors, he learned to negotiate less larcenous agreements. However, his company would not gain true independence until developing its own marketing and distribution capa-



Walt Disney shown sketching Mickey Mouse as a ship captain. Disney once said, “Mickey Mouse popped out of my mind onto a drawing pad [many] years ago on a train ride from Manhattan to Hollywood, at a time when the business fortunes of my brother Roy and myself were at the lowest ebb and disaster seemed right around the corner.” Disney, despite many obstacles, managed to create wholesome movies—both animated and live action—that stimulated the minds of young children and paid homage to our greatest national heroes.

bilities, many years later.

As his company grew, Walt pioneered as no other—pursuing perfection and innovation, rather than just going for the “quick bucks” as most Hollywood studios did. His breakthroughs included producing the first sound animation, the first color animation and the first feature-length animation. His quality was unmatched and the public went crazy for his films—and he won unparalleled accolades and awards.

Before long, Walt Disney Studios was the only major motion picture company that was not Jewish owned or controlled, and Walt believed he was consistently discriminated against. Hours after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, his studio was occupied by the U.S. Army. No other studio was singled out this way. During the war, Walt, as a true patriot, made numerous films for the government’s propaganda campaign at great financial loss to the studio. Yet Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau was never satisfied. During these years, the other studios profited greatly by making substandard films that the public desperately needed for diversion.

Disney was forced to go several million dollars in debt and by war’s end was on the verge of bankruptcy. Then another studio chief offered to fund the millions Walt needed for his next two animated features, but only if Walt agreed to sell out his operation. Furious, Walt resisted, and survived. Fortunately, his post-WWII features were enormously successful, aided by the eventual freeing up of European currencies.

After the war years, Walt felt persecuted by Communist and union activists and became suspicious of his competitors. He was sometimes accused of being “anti-Semitic,” but careful study reveals that that canard was not true, but a disingenuous weapon used by his more unethical detractors. Walt was a Christian patriot and an anti-Communist, who helped found the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals. As a man of principle, he resisted unfair business tactics and what he perceived as coordinated attacks against his company, and our nation. In actuality, Walt sought the best talent he could for his projects, and gave career opportunities to many aspiring artists. He was not averse to hiring non-Christian artists

(writers, actors, composers etc) and treated each person fairly, on his or her own merits.

Walt was beloved by most of his employees, who were inspired to create greater quality than possible anywhere else—and they were honored to be on his special team. As an idealist, and an honorable man, he would fight for “right,” in an industry not noted for its integrity or fair play. He was, foremost, an American patriot, who put God, country and family first.

The 1950s were a great decade for Walt Disney. He ventured into television as a way to help fund his Disneyland theme park vision and further promote his company name. Disney programs took ABC from a small upstart to a major network with a wonderful mix of family entertainment. Hundreds of educational and outdoor adventures captured

the imagination of home audiences and top-rated TV series, such as *Davy Crockett*, *The Mickey Mouse Club* and *Zorro*, which became enormously successful merchandising franchises.

Walt’s affection for the spirit of our Founding Fathers showed through countless shows about freedom: *Johnny Tremain*, *Dr. Syn: The Scarecrow of Romney Marsh*, *Tales of Texas John Slaughter*, *The Nine Lives of Elfege*

Baca, *Swamp Fox* and many others.

Some of Disney’s classic motion pictures and a few of the 1950 and 1960s television series can be acquired on DVD, but the current company management releases them in very limited quantities, which sell out immediately and then command huge prices in the aftermarkets. What a shame, as these programs are so much better than contemporary programming and could have a positive impact on our youth, if marketed more broadly to the television and video markets.

Many people view the Disneyland theme park as Walt’s crowning achievement. Opening in 1955, it took the world by storm—as “the happiest place on Earth.” However, it was only the beginning of his theme park visions, most of which were never realized, due to his untimely death. He died abruptly from lung cancer, at the age of 65, before having properly developed a capable successor. Walt had so many projects still in the works and so much creativity remaining, that we can only wonder what other amazing visions this great man might have brought to life, had he only

Walt Disney’s big break came with the creation of the Mickey Mouse character in 1928, after which his independence, and fame, steadily grew.



Disney the space pioneer: Above are shown, Walt Disney, left, and Dr. Wernher von Braun, then chief of the Guided Missile Development Operation Division at the Army Ballistic Missile Agency in Redstone Arsenal, Alabama in 1954. In the 1950s, von Braun worked with Disney Studio as a technical director, making three films about space exploration for television. (A model of the V-2 rocket is in the background.) Von Braun holds a model of a “flying wing” design aircraft that many modern fighter and bomber jets resemble.) Von Braun, of course, was the rocket scientist, engineer, space architect, and a leading figure in Germany and the United States during and after World War II. A one-time member of the Nazi Party and a commissioned SS officer, von Braun would later be regarded as the preeminent rocket engineer of the 20th century in his role with the United States civilian space agency NASA. It was, however, Walt Disney’s films that helped get the American public excited about space exploration.

had a few more years.

Unfortunately, if other “Walt Disneys” now try to arise, the industry will suppress them. Today, Hollywood is all about insider packaging and promoting a destructive agenda, not about developing quality or real talent, or new visions. Instead of being inspired to greatness, we are being dumbed down and propagandized to accept the values of Mammon. Hollywood and the media, in general, now serve a sinister purpose of controlling the masses and reducing us to a base, animal state. They have largely succeeded, but as

long as the memory of visionaries like Walt Disney live on, we can have role models for a very different future—one in which we can enjoy life and each other and achieve great things . . . our American dreams.

Some people believe Disney was cryonically suspended—and will be restored to full life one day, when medical science can achieve such things. It is an appropriate myth, as Walt believed that almost anything was possible, and we certainly could use his genius today, or at any future time. But the family denies the rumor. When Walt



Walt Disney understood that as he said, “movies can and do have tremendous influence in shaping young lives in the realm of entertainment towards the ideals and objectives of normal adulthood.” How disappointed he would have been to see the Walt Disney Film Studio used as a purveyor of vile pornography under the direction of Michael Eisner. It has been claimed that Marilyn Chambers, the porno film star, has starred in more movies for the modern-day Disney Co. than has Mickey Mouse. Today Disney Co. owns the largest percentage, as a partner, in the biggest company in the soft-to-medium porn market. Disney also owns many of the huge record labels producing the very bands and topics the “parental advisory” labels were created for—bands that glorify rape, drugs, murder, hate, violence against women, and violence in general.

Born and raised in Des Moines, Iowa, **MERLIN MILLER** graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. He served several years in the U.S. Army where he commanded two units and then worked as an Industrial Engineering Manager for Michelin Tire Co. In 1983, he was accepted into the University of Southern California’s “Peter Stark Motion Picture Producing Program,” graduating in 1985 with an MFA degree in Cinema/Television. He has since been an independent screenwriter, motion picture producer/director, and media instructor. His films include *A Place to Grow* starring Gary Mor-

passed on, his brother Roy took over for a few years and oversaw the opening of Florida’s Walt Disney World. Roy was succeeded by company faithful Card Walker and eventually by Walt’s son-in-law, Ron Miller.

Unknown to most people, Walt fought his entire career to build his dream, against incredible odds—and he succeeded. Unfortunately, after his death, the company floundered, finally succumbing to his enemies. I was in Hollywood at these later critical junctures, gaining some unique insights.

In late 1979 or early 1980, as I prepared to leave military service, I wrote Ron Miller, seeking an opportunity to work for the company. He had Frank Paris write back, a courteous but dismissive letter. I learned later that Ron was having his own difficulties and a battle was brewing on the board of directors between Ron and Roy Jr. Their animosities were long held, and Walt’s greatest failure was in not finding or developing a long-term successor with the necessary creative vision and management ability. Given Walt’s special qualities, it would have been difficult to find an acceptable replacement, if not impossible—and death simply took him too suddenly. Roy Jr., the only son of Walt’s brother, eventually became the largest individual stockholder, as Walt’s shares were divided among his wife, Lillian, and their two daughters, Diane (Ron’s wife) and Sharon. Unfortunately, the family animosities would grow—perhaps being manipulated by outside forces.

When I finally reached Hollywood in 1983 (as a University of Southern California graduate student), I learned that Tom Wilhite was president of production and working for Ron Miller. Tom had gained quick promotion by heading up the marketing for Mickey Mouse’s 50th anniversary celebration tour—a unique success for an increasingly desperate company. I was able to get to know Tom Wilhite through contacts from our home state of Iowa. He was to become a key figure during the takeover of Disney in 1984. In late 1983, Tom came to screen a new Disney release for my USC class, and, through his comments, the difficulties

ris and Wilford Brimley, and *Jericho* starring Mark Valley, Leon Coffee and R. Lee Erney. Mr. Miller has also written an unpublished treatise, “The American Dream,” about the political, military and media deceptions, which are destroying our country. He is now building Americana Pictures, a motion picture development, production and distribution company, as a quality alternative to Hollywood. The company plans to produce *False Flags*, a political thriller connecting the Israeli attack on the *USS Liberty* to contemporary intrigues. To learn more, visit www.Americana-Pictures.com. Call (865) 436-4923 to offer help.

at Disney became publicly apparent.

The next summer, I was disappointed to intern at Paramount, rather than at Disney, but ironically the team that I worked for (Michael Dammann Eisner, Jeff Katzenberg etc) left Paramount shortly thereafter to take over Disney. Roy Jr., working with his partner, Stanley Gold, finally succeeded in convincing enough of the Disney family members and other stockholders to oust Ron Miller and bring in a key part of the Jewish-dominant Paramount team, which quickly fired hundreds of the Disney faithful to bring in their own. Tom was given an extremely generous severance deal (as he indicated in trade magazines) and later formed his own production company, Hyperion Pictures, which has since made a score of films.

My connections to the Paramount team and the remnants of the Disney team led to no personal opportunities—as the Disney label was about to go through a Hollywoodization process, that would not involve people with Midwestern values or Walt Disney loyalties.

During the next few years, the new management team would not show any exceptional artistic ability. But they were shrewd business people and recognized the value of the Disney name and library. They very successfully began to re-release Disney's classic motion pictures, and grew a chain of Disney stores to capitalize on various merchandizing possibilities. The Disney Channel finally took off and company balance sheets reversed direction. These successes enabled the new team to increase their ownership positions in the overall company, and stockholders were once again happy—as their dormant goldmine had been retapped. Productions would gradually increase and efforts were made to seemingly meet traditional Disney programming expectations. In succeeding years, however, the quality would stealthily subside to the level of the other major studios, and Americana would lose its representative voice.

In 1989, I saw Tom, then director at the Sundance Film Festival, but gained no new insights. A few years thereafter, I left Hollywood with its elusive dealmaking to try to build my own independent opportunities. To succeed in Hollywood, you must willing to abandon the values of America. That was a compromise Walt would never make and is a compromise that has since been destroying the moral fiber

of our country. Since the takeover of Disney by Hollywood's elite, there has been a gradual emasculation of Prince Charming, and a defeminization of Sleeping Beauty. Cynicism has replaced charm, and nature's normal roles have been turned upside down through an advocacy of alternative lifestyles, miscegenation and contempt for Christian or traditional American values.

During the early 1990s, I visited Walt Disney's hometown in Marceline, Missouri and got to know Kaye Malins, director of the Walt Disney Hometown Museum, and her father, Rush Johnson—who had been friends with Walt and Roy. The town still has special tributes for Walt. It has the Disney Museum and other tributes, yet retains its small-town qualities. Ironically, the place in which he spent only a few years now gives him greater homage than Hollywood, or even his own company.

The Disney empire is all about money now, and the not-so-subtle subversion of Walt's world. Its contemporary films, television shows, music productions and merchandise are increasingly abhorrent to a healthy culture. Walt would be shocked to learn that his theme parks are no longer exclusive havens for families, but have

become temples for political correctness and cultural Marxism. They now tolerate, if not promote, alternative lifestyles and perversions that Walt would have clearly rejected.

Faced with the present-day world, Walt would be dismayed—but, I believe, he would still be the optimist. As one who always brought dreams to life, he would be leading the charge to reclaim our country and the future of our progeny. With quality entertainment as his primary weapon, he would restore the American dream. ♦

If other "Walt Disneys" now try to arise, the industry will suppress them. Today, Hollywood is all about insider packaging and promoting a destructive agenda.

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WHAT WOULD WALT THINK?

BY PETER PAPAHERAKLES

No one can deny that the name Walt Disney represents wholesome family entertainment. Since the 1920s, several generations of fans not only in the United States but the world over have grown up with his heartwarming tales. Disney's world reflected all that was decent and moral in the Christian West. Right and wrong were clearly identifiable concepts in his world, and there was no mistaking a hero with a villain. Mickey Mouse never lied, never stole and never cheated anyone. On the contrary, he volunteered his time and constantly put himself in personal danger in order to fight evil. He would not rest until the criminals were put behind bars and law and order reigned again in "Mouseton, Calisota."

As a child in Greece in the mid-1960s, I couldn't wait for the next issue of *Mickey Mouse* comics to come out. My first attempts at drawing were portraits of Donald Duck and Mickey. After immigrating to the U.S. and discovering television, I found the same excitement every Sunday on *The Wonderful World of Disney*.

A pioneer in animation and movies, Disney's era overlapped that of other American greats who shaped the early and mid-20th century, namely Thomas Edison and Henry Ford. All these men shared traits that made our country great. They were men of humble beginnings who worked extremely hard and overcame many obstacles in pursuit of their dreams and visions, based on a desire to make the world a better place. Their fame and fortune were simply a byproduct of their hard work and the huge contributions they made. It is sad to see that parasites have exploited the



A prominent cartoonist penned this illustration on the death of Walt Disney, Dec. 15, 1966.

magnificent creations of these men for personal financial gain, while giving back next to nothing to society. Edison invented motion pictures, but eventually parasites took control of that industry and use it now to brainwash mankind.

Ford was beloved by his workers. Today, the Ford Foundation is a tool of the globalists, the Ford Motor Company struggles to survive, and portions of Detroit are being razed to the ground.

Similarly, Walt Disney's company has been taken over and had much of the beauty and inspiration sucked right out of it.

Because of Disney's impeccable reputation for wholesome entertainment, parents cannot fathom that

today they are exposing their children to all sorts of social messages when they trust Disney Co. to entertain them. They aren't aware that companies under the Disney umbrella sell porn and satanic, drug-glorifying, pro-suicide music.

And they probably don't notice the subtler touches of how once-innocent interactions among animated characters have gotten "sexed up," or how miscegenation and other subversive attitudes have been peppered throughout Disney productions. For those who know the ways of these parasites, massive profits are only a means to an end; just gravy really. The real goal is culture distortion.

Nevertheless, for those of us who grew up idolizing Walt Disney, no amount of newfangled sleaze can tarnish the legacy he left behind in his countless masterpieces of animation, comics, movies and TV shows. He was truly one of the greatest Americans who ever lived. ♦

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