

# Who Was Jim Henson

Jim Henson

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James Maury Henson (September 24, 1936 – May 16, 1990) was an American puppeteer, animator, actor, and filmmaker who achieved worldwide notability as the creator of the Muppets. Henson was also well known for creating *Fraggle Rock* (1983–1987) and as the director of *The Dark Crystal* (1982) and *Labyrinth* (1986).

Born in Greenville, Mississippi, and raised in both Leland, Mississippi, and University Park, Maryland, Henson began developing puppets in high school. He created *Sam and Friends* (1955–1961), a short-form comedy television program on WRC-TV, while he was a freshman at the University of Maryland, College Park, in collaboration with fellow student Jane Nebel. Henson and Nebel co-founded Muppets, Inc. – now The Jim Henson Company – in 1958, and married less than a year later in 1959. Henson graduated from the University of Maryland with a degree in home economics.

In 1969, Henson joined the children's television program *Sesame Street* (1969–present) where he helped to develop Muppet characters for the series. He and his creative team also appeared on the first season of the sketch comedy show *Saturday Night Live* (1975–present). He produced the sketch comedy television series *The Muppet Show* (1976–1981) during this period. Henson revolutionized the way puppetry is captured and presented in video media, and he won fame for his characters – particularly Kermit the Frog, Rowlf the Dog, and the characters on *Sesame Street*. During the later years of his life, he founded the Jim Henson Foundation and Jim Henson's Creature Shop. He won the Emmy Award twice for his involvement in *The StoryTeller* (1987–1988) and *The Jim Henson Hour* (1989).

Henson died in New York City from toxic shock syndrome caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes*. At the time of his death, he was in negotiations to sell his company to The Walt Disney Company, but talks fell through after his death. He was posthumously awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1991, and was named a Disney Legend in 2011.

The Jim Henson Company

*Jim Henson Company, Inc., formerly known as Muppets, Inc., Henson Associates, Inc., and Jim Henson Productions, Inc. (commonly referred to as Henson)*

The Jim Henson Company, Inc., formerly known as Muppets, Inc., Henson Associates, Inc., and Jim Henson Productions, Inc. (commonly referred to as Henson), is an American entertainment company located in Los Angeles, California. The company is known for its innovations in the field of puppetry, particularly through the creation of Kermit the Frog and the Muppets characters.

Brian Henson is chairman and Lisa Henson is CEO. Since 2000, The Jim Henson Company is headquartered at the Jim Henson Company Lot, the historic former Charlie Chaplin Studios, in Hollywood.

The company was established in November 1958 by puppeteers Jim and Jane Henson, and is currently independently owned and operated by their children. Henson has produced many successful television series, including *The Muppet Show* (1976–1981), *Fraggle Rock* (1983–1987), and *Bear in the Big Blue House* (1997–2006); as well, the company designed the Muppet characters for *Sesame Street* (1969–present).

The company has also produced theatrical films, including *The Muppet Movie* (1979), *The Dark Crystal* (1982) and *Labyrinth* (1986). Henson also operates Jim Henson's Creature Shop, an animatronics and special effects studio which has created characters and digital effects for both Henson productions and outside projects. In 1989, the company entered merger negotiations with The Walt Disney Company, which were canceled following Jim Henson's death in 1990.

Subsequently, control of the company was assumed by Henson's children: Lisa, Cheryl, Brian, John, and Heather. In 2000, Henson was sold to German media company EM.TV & Merchandising AG; by the end of that year, however, EM.TV's stock collapsed, and the Henson family re-acquired the company in 2003.

In the interim, EM.TV sold the rights to the Sesame Street Muppets to Sesame Workshop in early January 2001, following a December 2000 announcement. Henson sold The Muppets and Bear in the Big Blue House properties to Disney in 2004, but retains the remainder of its program library and assets.

As of 2025, Brian, Lisa, Cheryl, and Heather Henson maintain control of the company. Their mother, Jane Henson, died in April 2013 and brother, John Henson, died in February 2014.

Brian Henson

*and Jane Henson. Henson was born on November 3, 1963 in New York City, the third child of Jane Henson (née Nebel; 1934–2013) and Jim Henson (1936–1990)*

Brian David Henson (born November 3, 1963) is an American puppeteer, filmmaker, and the chairman of The Jim Henson Company. He is the son of puppeteers Jim and Jane Henson.

Jane Henson

*Jane Ann Henson (née Nebel; June 16, 1934 – April 2, 2013) was an American puppeteer and co-founder of Muppets, Inc. with her husband Jim Henson. Jane Ann*

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The Jim Henson Hour

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The Jim Henson Hour is an American television series that aired on NBC in 1989. It was developed as a showcase for The Jim Henson Company's various puppet creations, including the Muppets.

Nine of the twelve episodes produced aired on NBC before the program was canceled due to low ratings. Two episodes later aired on Nickelodeon in November 1992 and August 1993, and the final episode "Food" never aired in the United States, but was broadcast in the UK in December 1990. After The Jim Henson Hour, the Muppets did not have another prime-time TV show until Muppets Tonight (1996–98), six years after Jim Henson's death.

Lisa Henson

*the Science Kid. She is the CEO of The Jim Henson Company, founded by her parents Jim and Jane Henson. Henson was born on May 9, 1960, in Westchester County*

Lisa Marie Henson (born May 9, 1960) is an American television and film producer who has been involved in television shows such as Sid the Science Kid. She is the CEO of The Jim Henson Company, founded by her parents Jim and Jane Henson.

## Cheryl Henson

*Cheryl Lee Henson (born August 7, 1961) is an American puppet builder and philanthropist who has served as the president of the Jim Henson Foundation*

Cheryl Lee Henson (born August 7, 1961) is an American puppet builder and philanthropist who has served as the president of the Jim Henson Foundation since 1992. A supporter of puppetry arts and artists, she serves as a board member of The Jim Henson Company. She was honored in 2010 at the LaMama Gala, and in 2011, she won the New Victory Arts Award for her leadership in puppetry.

## Jim Henson Company Lot

*The Jim Henson Company Lot, formerly A&M Studios, is a studio property located just south of the southeast corner of La Brea Avenue and Sunset Boulevard*

The Jim Henson Company Lot, formerly A&M Studios, is a studio property located just south of the southeast corner of La Brea Avenue and Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. Originally established by film star Charlie Chaplin, the property served as Charlie Chaplin Studios from 1917 to 1953, which later earned the site designation as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

After being sold by Chaplin in 1953, the property went through several changes in ownership and has served at various times as the original studio of Hanna-Barbera Productions, Kling Studios, the Red Skelton Studios, the shooting location for the Adventures of Superman and Perry Mason television series.

From 1966 to 1999, it was the headquarters for A&M Records and the location of A&M Recording Studios. Since 2000, it has the headquarters of The Jim Henson Company, including the Henson Soundstage and Henson Recording Studios.

## The StoryTeller (TV series)

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The StoryTeller is a live-action/puppet television series that originally aired in 1987 and which was created and produced by Jim Henson.

Reruns of The StoryTeller episodes were featured in some episodes of The Jim Henson Hour.

## John Henson (puppeteer)

*was the son of puppeteer Jim Henson (1936–1990), best known as the creator of the Muppets, and Jane Henson (1934–2013), who assisted in the launch of*

John Paul Henson (April 25, 1965 – February 14, 2014) was an American puppeteer. He was best known for his association with the Muppets.

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