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JANE NEBEL HENSON 1934-2013

Puppeteer, philanthropist and founder of The Jim Henson Legacy

Hollywood (April 2, 2013) – Jane Henson died in her Connecticut home on April 2, 2013 after a long battle with cancer. A tribute page celebrating Jane and featuring images from her life can be found at www.henson.com/jane.html. A memorial mass is planned for next week. Donations may be sent in memory of Jane Henson to the following:

- Center for Puppetry Arts <http://puppet.org/contribute/donation.shtml>
- The Jim Henson Foundation for the support of puppetry <http://hensonfoundation.org/>
- The Puppetry Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theatre Centre <http://www.theoneill.org/>

About Jane Nebel Henson

Jane Nebel Henson met Jim Henson in a puppetry class at the University of Maryland and soon after became an integral creative and business partner in what would become the world famous Muppets.

As a fine arts education major studying at the University of Maryland in 1954, Jane Nebel shared with Jim Henson a unique approach to puppetry that is joyful and sophisticated. While still an undergraduate, Jim Henson was offered a spot on the local NBC affiliate in Washington, D.C., WRC-TV, and asked Jane Nebel to join him as a co performer and creator.

The television show, *Sam and Friends*, which aired before *The Huntley-Brinkley Report* and *The Tonight Show Starring Steve Allen*, in Washington D.C., began to attract an enthusiastic audience. It wasn't long before the Muppets were making special guest appearances on the top variety shows of the time. Their first national television guest appearance was on Steve Allen's *Tonight Show*, the same show that *Sam and Friends* had preceded. Jane Nebel graduated in 1955, but continued working with Jim Henson at WRC-TV as a performer, puppet designer/builder, and business partner. In May 1959, Jane Nebel married Jim Henson at her parents' home in Salisbury, MD.

Within the next five years, Jane gave birth to Lisa Henson (1960), Cheryl Henson (1961), Brian Henson (1963), and John Henson (1965). Heather Henson was born in 1970.

2-2-2 Jane Henson

Jane Ann Nebel was born June 16, 1934 in St. Albans (Queens), New York City. Her parents were Winifred Johnson Nebel and Adalbert Nebel. Her father was known professionally as Dal Lee, an astrologer. Older siblings include her sister Margareta Regina Nebel Jennings and brother Brereton Edward Nebel.

In addition to her work on the Muppets, Mrs. Henson continued her studies in fine art at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. Years later, the family would live in Greenwich, CT, where Jane was assistant art teacher at the Mead School for Human Development. She continued her official association with The Jim Henson Company, and actively participated in the company as it became an important global family entertainment organization, collaborating with Jim Henson on a number of projects that included the traveling museum exhibit The Art of The Muppets, and The Muppet Show on Tour and Sesame Street Live arena stage shows. Known for her keen eye for spotting puppeteer talent, Jane also became the point of entry to the company for many top puppeteers.

Mrs. Henson also served on the board of The Jim Henson Foundation, founded in 1982 by Jim Henson to promote and develop the art of puppetry and presently headed by Cheryl Henson. Each year the Foundation introduces thousands of adults and families to puppetry through grant-making and public awareness efforts. Since its inception, the Foundation has awarded more than 675 grants to more than 300 American puppet artists for the creation and development of new work. In 1992, Mrs. Henson funded and founded The Jim Henson Legacy, to conserve, preserve and present the artistic contribution of Jim Henson. In 2001, Mrs. Henson created the Jane Henson Foundation, where she continued her philanthropic work.

Mrs. Henson also co-founded The National Puppetry Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, where she displayed a notable talent for discovering new performers and supporting their work. Her association with the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, the Union Internationale de la Marionette (UNIMA), Puppetry Guild of Greater New York, the University of Maryland Alumni Association, The Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta, GA, The Paley Center in New York, and The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History has brought to Mrs. Henson many awards and honors.

Legally separated in 1986, Jim and Jane Henson continued to share their love of, and vision for, the Muppets. Jane Nebel Henson, always modest about her own contribution to the creation and success of the Muppets, would often speak to the public about Jim Henson's body of work and how "Jim wanted to leave the world a better place." According to Arthur Novell, the Trustee of The Jim Henson Legacy, "most would agree they both did."

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The Jim Henson Company has remained an established leader in family entertainment for over 50 years and is recognized worldwide as an innovator in puppetry, animatronics and digital animation. Best known as creators of the world famous Muppets, Henson has received over 50 Emmy Awards and nine Grammy Awards. Recent credits include the Emmy® nominated "Sid the Science Kid," "Dinosaur Train," "Wilson & Ditch: Digging America" and "Pajanimals." Features include "The Dark Crystal," "Labyrinth," "MirrorMask," and "Unstable Fables" and television productions include "Fraggle Rock" and the sci-fi cult series "Farscape."

With additional locations in New York and London, The Jim Henson Company is headquartered in Los Angeles on the historic Charlie Chaplin lot, complete with soundstage and postproduction facilities. Independently owned and operated by the five adult children of founder Jim Henson, the Company is also home to Jim Henson's Creature Shop™, a pre-eminent character-building and visual effects group with international film, television and advertising clients, as well as Henson Recording Studios, one of the music industry's top recording facilities known for its world-class blend of state-of-the-art and vintage equipment. The Company's Henson Alternative brand has recently launched the national tour of "Stuffed and Unstrung," a live puppet improvisational show named one of the top 10 "Best Stage Shows of 2010" by *Entertainment Weekly*.

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