

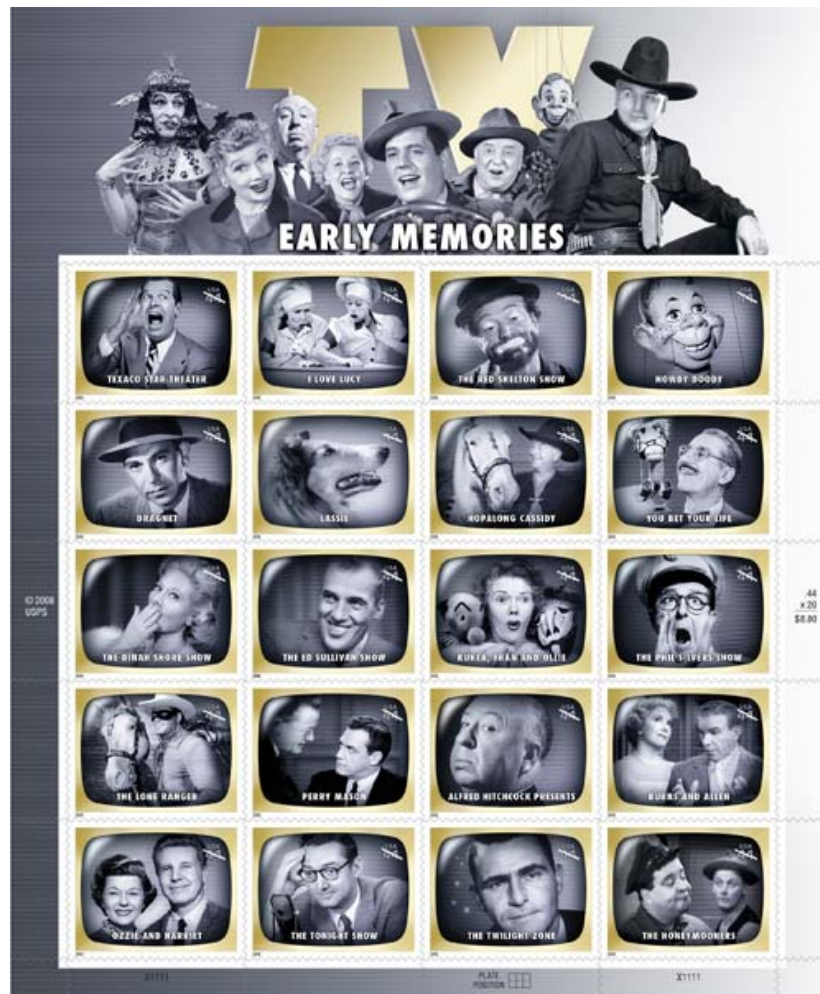
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## **‘Early TV Memories’ Stamps Commemorate Golden Age of Television** *Tonight Show, Ozzie and Harriett, The Lone Ranger Among 20 TV Shows Honored*

**LOS ANGELES**—Woof woof! What's that Lassie? You're on a stamp? But where's Timmy?

One of America's most revered canines was among 20 television icons that came out of retirement today to be honored on the U.S. Postal Service's *Early TV Memories* 44-cent commemorative First-Class stamp sheet. Lassie participated in the first-day-of-issue dedication ceremony that took place at the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in North Hollywood.

Available nationwide today, all 50 million stamps, available in sheets of 20, commemorate *Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet*; *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*; *The Dinah Shore Show*; *Dragnet*; *The Ed Sullivan Show*; *The George Burns & Gracie Allen Show*; *Hopalong Cassidy*; *The Honeymooners*; *Howdy Doody*; *I Love Lucy*; *Kukla, Fran and Ollie*; *Lassie*; *The Lone Ranger*; *Perry Mason*; *The Phil Silvers Show*; *The Red Skelton Show*; *Texaco Star Theater*; *The Tonight Show*; *The Twilight Zone*; and, *You Bet Your Life*.

"All of the classic television shows represented on these stamps represents the collective memory of a generation well deserving of entertainment," said U.S. Postal Service Board of Governor member James C. Miller III in dedicating the stamps. "It was a generation that survived the Great Depression and fought World War II. They were pioneers — creative geniuses — who brought television shows of the 1950's into our homes, breaking new ground to provide entertainment for everyone."

Joining Miller in dedicating the stamps were Steve Allen's wife, Jayne Meadows Allen; actor, director and comedian Carl Reiner, who emceed the event; and Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Chairman John Shaffner.

Art director Carl Herrman of North Las Vegas, NV, designed the stamps and worked with twenty2product, a San Francisco-based studio, to give the archival photos used in the stamp art a suitably "retro" look.

**###**

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## Early TV Memories Background



### Howdy Doody

Featuring live-action characters and marionettes, *Howdy Doody* entertained baby boomers and helped sell television sets to their parents. Puppet Howdy and other residents of Doodyville performed before a live audience of children known as the peanut gallery. Each episode began with a question — “Say, kids, what time is it?” — answered by the children in unison: “It’s Howdy Doody time!”



### The Red Skelton Show

Red Skelton was already famous when he brought his store of funny faces and voices to television with this long-running show. He played comic characters such as country boy Clem Kadiddlehopper, boxer Cauliflower McPugg, and Junior the “mean widdle kid,” whose phrase “I dood it!” became popular with viewers. One of his most popular characters, Freddie the Freeloader, is shown in the stamp art.



### I Love Lucy

As bandleader Ricky Ricardo and his wife, Lucy, Desi Arnaz and his real-life spouse Lucille Ball waged a comedic battle of the sexes. William Frawley and Vivian Vance played their landlords and best friends, Fred and Ethel Mertz. Lucy and Ethel had wacky adventures like the one depicted in the stamp art, with Ethel and Lucy trying to keep up with candies on a conveyor belt.



### Texaco Star Theater

Comedian Milton Berle worked successfully in radio and film before moving to TV, where he became the new medium’s first superstar. His show was known for his clowning, often in outlandish costume and for the quartet that sang the sponsor’s jingle (“Oh, we’re the men of Texaco...”). Berle became known as “Mr. Television” and was credited with driving up television sales.



### **You Bet Your Life**

This game show was built around the personality of its host, comedy star Groucho Marx, who loaded his banter with quips. A toy duck lowered from the ceiling delivered a cash prize when contestants said the week's "secret word," a common word selected in advance. The actual quiz was less the focal point than an opportunity to unleash Groucho's wit.



### **Hopalong Cassidy**

William Boyd, a leading man from the silent film era, gave life to the title character of this Western series. As originally created by novelist Clarence E. Mulford, Hopalong was a rough-talking cowboy. Later, "Hoppy" was made suitable for a broader audience. He appeared on the covers of national magazines and on such items as lunchboxes, roller skates and watches.



### **Lassie**

In 1954, at a time when many Americans had left the countryside for cities and suburbs, Lassie made her television debut, offering viewers a nostalgic look at rural life. Since then, one of the world's most famous dogs has been welcomed into millions of homes. By performing rescues and other feats, Lassie has become the embodiment of trust, loyalty and friendship.



### **Dragnet**

Between the memorable opening notes of its theme and the concluding details about the fate of its villains, this police procedural emphasized the day-to-day drudgery of detective work instead of pulse-pounding action. Series creator Jack Webb, who starred as Sgt. Joe Friday, told a reporter, "We try to make it as real as a guy pouring a cup of coffee."





### **The Phil Silvers Show**

This subversive comedy, set at a fictional army base in Kansas, made a hero of conniving Army Master Sergeant Ernest T. Bilko, a con man who flourished even in the confines of the military. With a highly developed sense of irony and acerbic wit that kept his essential decency hidden, Bilko (Phil Silvers, shown in the stamp art) saw through the American dream.



### **Kukla, Fran and Ollie**

The “Kuklapolitan” puppets — chief among them gentle Kukla, who resembled a clown, and Ollie, a mischievous dragon with one prominent tooth — were popular with adults as well as children. The humor in this largely improvised show resided not in slapstick, as in typical puppet theater, but in satire and wit. Host Fran Allison treated the puppet characters as if they were real.



### **The Ed Sullivan Show**

Through more than 20 years on the air, host Ed Sullivan kept Broadway buffs, jazz fans, rock-and-rollers and others entertained on Sunday nights. His long-running variety show — called *Toast of the Town* in its early years — provided a showcase for virtually every kind of act, from classical musicians, ballet dancers, and comedians to popular performers such as Elvis Presley, Ella Fitzgerald, and the Beatles.



### **The Dinah Shore Show**

Dinah Shore, one of the first popular singers on television and the host of several variety shows over the years, was widely known for her warmth, sincerity and relaxed style. She is remembered for singing her sponsor's theme song (“See the U.S.A. in your Chevrolet”) and for sending the audience off with a farewell kiss at the end of her show. M-wah!



### **The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show**

George Burns and Gracie Allen were a popular comedy team from vaudeville and radio. On television, they played versions of themselves, a married couple dealing with various complications. Allen acted the part of the zany blonde who disrupted the order represented by her husband, the "straight man" who moved in and out of the action to comment on it directly.



### **Alfred Hitchcock Presents**

Film director Alfred Hitchcock presented tales of mystery and suspense in this anthology series. Its memorable theme music was based on Charles Gounod's "Funeral March of a Marionette." The balding, rotund Hitchcock introduced each episode and appeared again at the end to offer assurance that evildoers had been punished, addressing the television audience with his trademark drollery and gallows humor.



### **Perry Mason**

In a typical episode of this long-running courtroom drama, protagonist Perry Mason and his team cleared their client of murder charges and identified the actual killer, who was usually present when exposed as the culprit. The stamp art features Mason (Raymond Burr, at right) in confrontation with his customary trial opponent, the formidable District Attorney Hamilton Burger (William Talman).



### **The Lone Ranger**

The year 2008 marked the 75th anniversary of *The Lone Ranger*. Since his radio debut in 1933, this masked hero has captivated loyal fans in books, movies, comics, and — most successfully of all—television. Clayton Moore played the virtuous if mysterious title character who was beloved for his valor, righteousness, and the jaunty command he gave his white horse: "Hi-yo, Silver, away!"



### The Honeymooners

*The Honeymooners* presented a comic view of working-class life and marriage. Jackie Gleason starred as Ralph Kramden, an irascible bus driver susceptible to get-rich-quick schemes and frequently embroiled in arguments with his more levelheaded wife, Alice. Unfortunately, his longed-for jackpot always failed to materialize. Art Carney, pictured in the stamp art with Gleason, was memorable as Ralph's neighbor, friend and foil, Ed Norton.



### The Twilight Zone

*The Twilight Zone* cautioned viewers not to be too sure of anything. Intended for an adult audience, this anthology series focused on the imaginary and the bizarre. Creator Rod Serling wrote many episodes and served as narrator. The stranger-than-fiction dramas were often social commentaries set against a background of fantasy and science fiction.



### The Tonight Show

The basic format of this long-running late show—comedy, music, and talk hosted by one magnetic personality—was intact from the beginning. Various hosts have entertained the show's audience over the years. The first, Steve Allen, pioneered the format and is pictured in the stamp art. Allen is remembered for his genuine wit, talent at the piano and for interacting "live" with his studio audience.



### The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet

Bandleader Ozzie Nelson, his wife, Harriet, and their sons, David and Ricky, played versions of themselves on a set designed to replicate their real-life home. Ozzie seemed to be around all the time, while Harriet ran things effortlessly and was always beautifully dressed. Gentle comedy arose from everyday problems and misunderstandings as their talented sons grew up and married.

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### How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 60 days to obtain the First-Day-of-Issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, at The Postal Store® website at [www.usps.com/shop](http://www.usps.com/shop), or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

Early TV Memories Stamp  
Postmaster  
North Hollywood Post Office  
7035 Laurel Canyon Blvd.  
North Hollywood, CA 91605-9998

After applying the First-Day-of-Issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by Oct. 12, 2009.

### How to Order First-Day Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 1 800 STAMP-24 or writing to:

Information Fulfillment  
Dept. 6270  
U.S. Postal Service  
P.O. Box 219014  
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

### Philatelic Products

Share treasured memories with the premium stamped cards featuring 20 shows from TV's golden age (Item 463366, \$14.95).



There are six other philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 463362, First-Day Cover, Full Sheet, \$11.30.
- 463364, First-Day Cover Cancelled Full Sheet, \$11.30.
- 463368, Digital Color Postmark, Set of 20, \$30





463384, Uncut Press Sheet, \$79.20.

463391, Ceremony Program, \$6.95.

463399, Cancellation Keepsake – Pane of 20 & Random Single Digital Color Postmark, \$10.30.



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