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Photo Courtesy: WQED/IMDb
It's always a beautiful day in the neighborhood thanks to Fred Rogers. For 33 years, he was the creator, showrunner and host of the American television series, Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. He transformed children's television, promoting kindness and speaking openly about children's emotional and physical concerns. Rogers won the hearts of many people. He also earned honorary degrees and awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom and a Lifetime Achievement Emmy. Was there anything this man couldn't do? Read on to learn more about the legacy of everyone's beloved "neighbor," Mr. Rogers.He Hated TV, So He Changed IWhen Rogers turned on the television, he often saw violence and people demeaning each other. The inhumanity made him furious, so he decided to inspire change in the medium, believing there was a way to "nurture" viewers with a charming and gentle program. As a result, he created Mister Rogers' Neighborhood to spread knowledge and kindness. The show's production and sets were basic, but that didn't stop it from becoming groundbreaking television.Photo Courtesy: WQED/IMDb
Celebrities and Even Animals Loved HimNot only did Rogers make a significant impact on kids and their parents, but he also influenced celebrities. One of his fans is Michael Keaton, who ended up hosting a lovely Mr. Rogers documentary called It's You I Like. Tom Hanks also adores Rogers and portrayed him in the 2019 film A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood. Photo Courtesy: Fred Rogers Production/IMDb
One of Rogers' biggest fans wasn't even human. Koko, the Stanford-educated gorilla who knew 2,000 English words and 1,000 words in American Sign Language, loved him too. When Rogers met her, she instantly welcomed him with open arms and took off his shoes (the same way he does on the show).He Personally Responded to Every Letter from FansRogers' daily routine included waking up at five every morning, praying, writing, studying, exercising and replying to all his fan mail. The show's program assistant, Heather Arnet, told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, "He respected the kids who wrote them. He never thought about throwing out a drawing or letter. They were sacred." Photo Courtesy: WQED/IMDb
The letters were more than just drawings and ramblings. Many children opened up to him about their personal issues, such as a loss in the family or other serious problems. Each day, Rogers received 50 to 100 letters from fans, and he wrote back to each one. Today, the Fred Rogers Center in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, holds almost 1 million of those letters.He Was a Gifted MusicianAfter attending Dartmouth College for one year, Rogers transferred to Rollins College. He graduated magna cum laude with a degree in music. As a talented songwriter, he created all the tunes for Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, which is more than 200 songs. He also played the piano magnificently, and it shows in each episode. Photo Courtesy: WQED/IMDb
Rogers created music at a young age, even after getting bullied. When he was a child, life was tough. His was shy and overweight, and his classmates teased him. "I used to cry to myself when I was alone. And I would cry through my fingers and make up songs on the piano," recalled Rogers.He Saved Public Television and the VCRIn 1969, Rogers went to Washington D.C. to help stop budget cuts for public television. He presented his case in front of the Senate, explaining how he could help children. "I feel that if we in public television can only make it clear that feelings are mentionable and manageable, we will have done a great service for mental health," Rogers explained to the Senate. He did more than just stop the budget cuts by the end of the hearing. Within six minutes, he convinced the committee to provide \$22 million in funding for public TV. Photo Courtesy: danieldreiber/YouTube
In 1984, Rogers supported the "fair use" of media in a Supreme Court case. Some people considered recording TV shows to be copyright infringement. However, Rogers influenced the outcome, arguing that it was important for parents to be able to record children's programs and watch them at more fitting times as a family.He Cared Deeply About OthersFrom 1968 to 2001, Rogers made sure to use his show for good. Focusing on children's emotional and physical struggles, he included many personal topics because he cared about his audience's needs, concerns and happiness. He answered questions about everything from scary haircuts to fights with siblings to divorce and war. Photo Courtesy: Tremolo Productions/IMDb
Rogers was well-prepared for his young audience because he attended the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Child Development. He also worked with a child psychologist for 30 years. Many people found Rogers caring, including reporters and limo drivers. During interviews, he asked reporters questions about their lives and got to know them. It wasn't uncommon for him to call them every once in a while to keep in touch. He did the same to one of his limo drivers. During one of the rides, the driver mentioned they were passing his house. Wanting to meet the driver's family, Rogers asked if they could stop by. The result was heartwarming. Rogers played the piano and talked to the family into the night. MORE FROM ASK.COM
Photo Courtesy: Frank Carroll/Getty Images
Nearly four decades after emerging onto the scene, Mr. T remains as iconic as ever. From his signature look to his memorable catchphrase, the actor and former wrestler is instantly recognizable by audiences both young and old. Despite his renown, there's a lot that many people don't know about the star. Whether it be his humble beginnings or the origin of his quiffseminal style, Mr. T and his unique tough-guy persona are in fact quite multifaceted.The Origin of Mr. T's NameMr. T was born Lawrence Tureaud on May 21 of 1952. Born a minister's son, he and his four sisters and seven brothers all bore the surname until their father abandoned them just five years after Lawrence's birth. As an act of silent rebellion against his dad, he shortened his name to Lawrence Tero. Photo Courtesy: Rand, McNally & Co./Pictoral Chicago
In 1970, he legally changed his last name to T. Now officially Mr. T, the young man formerly known as Lawrence Tero felt his new name allowed him to immediately receive the respect he deserved.Mr. T's AdolescenceAll 12 Tureaud children lived in a single three-bedroom apartment in the Robert Taylor Homes of Chicago, Illinois. A public housing project in Bronzeville on the south side of the city, the building was named after the first African-American chairman of the Chicago Housing Authority (and activist) Robert Rochon Taylor. Photo Courtesy: John Vachon/National Archives and Records Administration
Tureaud attended Dunbar Vocational High School. A public school that aimed to help students work toward a career, Dunbar allowed him to realize his passions for football, wrestling and martial arts. He even managed to earn the title of citywide wrestling champion two years in a row.Mr. T's Life After High SchoolThanks to his football skills, Lawrence Tureaud (now Mr. T) earned a scholarship to play ball for Prairie View A&M University in Prairie View, Texas. At the historically Black public university, Mr. T majored in mathematics until he was expelled after freshman year. Photo Courtesy: Texas State/Texas State Library From there, Mr. T decided to sign up for the Army. He served in the Military Police Corps for the duration of his tour. After being discharged, he tried out for Wisconsin's NFL team, the Green Bay Packers, which was the league's third-oldest franchise. Unfortunately, a knee injury kept him from making the team.The Origin of Mr. T's JewelryHe might have been Mr. T by name, but after failing to make it into the NFL, he was far from the person he would soon become. Left with nowhere to turn, Mr. T started working as a bouncer for a club called Dingbats on Chicago's North Side. Photo Courtesy: Frank Carroll/Getty Images
The number of gold chains and other pieces of jewelry left at Dingbats was astounding. Mr. T wore it all around his neck so customers could approach him if they'd lost something. He cleaned the jewelry often and even slept in it because it took over an hour to put on.Behind Mr. T's Iconic HairstyleWhen looking through an issue of National Geographic, Mr. T was floored by the hairstyles of West Africa's Mandinka warriors. Inspired by what he had seen, he decided that he, too, would adopt a similar hairstyle as a way to honor his African heritage. Photo Courtesy: LIFE/Getty Images
Along with his plethora of gold chains, which he decided to continue wearing as a tribute to his enslaved ancestors even after departing Dingbats, Mr. T had fully realized the look that he's now famous for. Ironically, today the hairstyle is attributed far more to Mr. T than Mandinka warriors.Inventing Mr. T's PersonNow in possession of the eventual-classic Mr. T moniker and looks, all he needed was the attitude. This came naturally with being a bouncer. Responsible for keeping drug dealers and users out of Dingbats, Mr. T claims to have gotten in over 200 fights without ever losing one. Photo Courtesy: Mike Slaughter/Toronto Star
via Getty Images
After leaving Dingbats, he became a bodyguard — a career he managed to maintain for nearly a decade. When he was just starting out, Mr. T stuck to guarding prostitutes, bankers, preachers and teachers before moving up to fashion designers, models, athletes and countless celebrities and millionaires.Mr. T's Budding Celebrity StatusAlmost 10 years in, Mr. T was practically a bodyguard brand name. Toward the end of his bodyguarding career, celebrities such as Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Joe Frazier and Muhammad Ali all trusted him (and paid him anywhere from \$3,000 to \$10,000 a day) to keep them safe from harm. Photo Courtesy: NBCUniversal/Getty Images
Mr. T was also susceptible to plenty of odd offerings — contracted assassinations, private investigations and debt collections by force, just to name a few. He was even offered the opportunity to become an undercover hired hitman for just shy of \$100,000 per target.Mr. T on America's Toughest BouncerA competition on NBC's Sunday Games turned out to be the key to Mr. T's success. Subtitled America's Toughest Bouncer, the program saw contestants attempting tasks like breaking through a thick wooden door and throwing 150-pound stuntmen. Photo Courtesy: Public Domain/Good Free Photos
The program culminated in a boxing match between finalists. Mr. T competed twice, winning both times. Little did he know that Sylvester Stallone, action movie superstar and creative mastermind behind the Rocky movies, was watching at home. Mr. T's skills in the ring were enough to inspire Stallone to give him a leading role in Rocky III.His Breakout RoleAt first, Sylvester Stallone only intended for Mr. T to have a few lines of dialogue in his third Rocky film — nothing more than a bit part. Once Stallone actually spent time with him, though, it was clear Mr. T belonged in the role of the primary antagonist: Clubber Lang. Photo Courtesy: Christine Loss/IMDb
Stallone took some of Mr. T's quotes from America's Toughest Bouncer and reposed them for the film, inadvertently creating the rising star's most iconic line in the process: "No, I don't hate Balboa, but I pity the fool." We don't need to tell you how iconic "I pity the fool" became.Mr. T on the A-TeamA year after Rocky III, Mr. T was given another leading role: that of ex-Army commando Sergeant Bosco Albert "B.A." Baracus on NBC's The A-Team (1983-1987). The show follows four men, all ex-military, on the run from the U.S. government for a crime they didn't commit. Photo Courtesy: Michael J. Jacobs/IMDb
Mr. T's character was known as the tough guy of the group, always managing to use his expert mechanical skills to get them out of tough situations (despite the character's occasional dimwittedness). Mr. T would claim that only a very smart person could play such a dumb character.Going AnimatedThe same year The A-Team premiered, NBC also invested in a Ruby-Spears-produced, Scooby-Doo-style cartoon starring the actor called Mister T. Playing a stylized version of himself, the animated version of Mr. T owned a gym and helped train gymnasts to solve mysteries and fight crimes alongside him. Photo Courtesy: Mister T Cartoon (Theme Song)
Only 30 episodes were produced, but these 30 episodes were spread out over three seasons that aired consecutively between '83 and '86. The show proved to be one of Ruby-Spears' most successful animated productions alongside Alvin and the Chipmunks.Mr. T in D.C. CabAlso in 1983, Mr. T earned the starring role in what remains the only movie to put the actor in the spotlight solo: D.C. Cab. The film features Mr. T in the leading role and an ensemble of celebrity cameos like Gary Busey, Adam Baldwin, stand-up comedian Paul Rodriguez and bodybuilders the Barbarian Brothers. Photo Courtesy: Drew Struzan/IMDb
Despite the project's modest star power and extensive marketing, it barely made back its \$12-million budget (earning just \$16 million during its run) and received middling reviews. Mr. T hasn't been given the chance to star in a film since.Mr. T's Motivational Speaking CareerGiven his hugely intimidating stature, it was only a matter of time for Mr. T to try his luck at motivational speaking. As it turns out, this was just another one of his callings in life. Debuting in 1984, Be Somebody...or Be Somebody's Fool! was very successful. Photo Courtesy: Mr.T - Be Somebody...or Be Somebody's Fool!
Geared toward children, the motivational video aimed to give adolescents the confidence to love themselves and their heritage, control their anger and even dress decently without spending a fortune. Nearly half the video's running time consists of Mr. T singing encouraging songs.Mr. T's AlbumsComing off the success of Be Somebody...or Be Somebody's Fool!, Mr. T doubled down on home media with the release of Mr. T's Commandments. In a similar vein as Be Somebody..., the album instructed children to keep away from drugs and stay in school. Photo Courtesy: Steve Cadman/Flickr
Later that year, Mr. T also put out a CD version of Be Somebody... to equally great numbers. Despite two extremely profitable releases in one year, Mr. T's albums came to an end after this (unless you count his appearance on Busta Rhymes' song "Pass the Courvoisier, Part II" in 2002).Mr. T's Professional Wrestling CareerThanks to his success across multiple fields, Mr. T was easily able to make the transition to professional wrestling in 1985. Starting out as Hulk Hogan's tag-team partner in the World Wrestling Federation's inaugural Wrestlemania, Mr. T is often credited as the sole reason why Wrestlemania I succeeded. Photo Courtesy: Tech. Sgt. Sean Tobin/US Air Force
His wrestling career continued throughout the '80s and '90s; he starred in plenty of high-profile matches against people like "Rowdy" Roddy Piper and "Cowboy" Bob Orton. Mr. T was so beloved during this time that he was honored with an induction into the WWE Hall of Fame in 2014.Mr. T CerealWhen a celebrity is big, many corporations leap at the opportunity to license the celeb's name and likeness. In Mr. T's case, that meant allowing the Quaker Oats company to create Mr. T Cereal in 1984. In fact, it was the very first cereal the company ever manufactured. Photo Courtesy: BrokenSphere/Wikipedia
Fortified with iron and vitamin B, Mr. T Cereal was a crispy, sweet corn and oat cereal that was essentially a knockoff of Cap'n Crunch — it shared a similar flavor and texture, right down to its identical golden color. A packet of stickers could always be found inside.The Lake Forest Chainsaw MassacreMr. T's notoriety wasn't limited exclusively to the big screen or TV. No, as a matter of fact, at least to his neighbors in Lake Forest, Illinois, Mr. T was just as intimidating and destructive in real life. Photo Courtesy: acetom/Pixabay
In 1987, Mr. T angered fellow Lake Forest residents and garnered national media attention for his decision to cut down over 100 oak trees in the area surrounding his home. Mr. T owned the land — it all fell within the boundaries of his estate — but many were displeased with the celebrity's outright disregard for nature.Mr. T on T. and T.Piggypacking on the success of The A-Team and Mister T, Canada chose to enlist the actor for a show of its own in the wake of The A-Team's final season. Titled T. and T., the program ran for three years between 1987 and 1990 and tallied up 65 episodes. Photo Courtesy: Ben Mark Holzberg/IMDb
The action-packed and socially conscious program followed Mr. T as T.S. Turner and Alex Amini as Amy Taler. After Turner was framed for a crime and Taler helped set him free, the two teamed up to help stop crime as cunning private detectives.Mr. T's Cancer ScareDue to health problems, the 1990s saw Mr. T drastically reduce his public appearances. Diagnosed with cancer — specifically T-cell lymphoma — in 1995, the actor limited himself to the occasional television commercial. With a schedule like this, Mr. T could spend a day or two shooting an ad and the rest of the week focusing on recovering. Photo Courtesy: Gabriel Caponetti/Wikipedia
Due to his lighthearted nature disguised underneath his tough-guy persona, it's not surprising to find Mr. T would often joke about his diagnosis. The irony was not lost on him that his specific type of cancer was called "T-cell."Mr. T's Career in CommercialsAfter fully recovering from T-cell lymphoma in the mid-'90s, Mr. T continued to book television commercial on top of television commercial instead of returning to acting. As it turns out, the laid-back nature of advertisement shoots was preferable for the actor (then in his late 40s by 2000). Photo Courtesy: Kuba Bozanowski/Wikipedia
This decision was another genius move for Mr. T. His many commercial appearances crystalized his status as a pop culture icon for a whole new generation of fans who knew his name from Snickers, World of Warcraft and Fuz Ice Tea ads, among many other brands.Mr. T's Cameo AppearancesDespite focusing on commercials, Mr. T still managed to prioritize a TV or film cameo here and there. Reducing his participation to mere walk-on roles only furthered his status as a timeless icon. Mr. T added another skill to his resumé: impeccable comedic timing. Photo Courtesy: Rico Torres/IMDb
From Spy Hard to Inspector Gadget and Blossom to Malcolm in the Middle, Mr. T would appear as himself and earn huge laughs. Children who were born after Rocky III's release by nearly a decade knew Mr. T's name practically as well as their parents did. Mr. T just couldn't fail.Mr. T's Chains Come OffWhen the U.S. was hit by Hurricane Katrina, no one could have imagined the wide-ranging scope of the damage. With homes and businesses destroyed across the coast, the natural disaster was a tragedy. The nation, including Mr. T, stopped everything to help the victims. Photo Courtesy: U.S. Coast Guard, Petty Officer 2nd Class Kyle Niemi/Wikipedia
Seeing so many people lose everything they've ever owned impacted the star in ways he never anticipated. Looking down and seeing his hundreds of dollars' worth of jewelry now rubbed him the wrong way, so he decided to shed this trademark feature of his appearance once and for all.Mr. T's Reality ShowDuring the commercial- and cameo-fueled Mr. T renaissance of the mid-2000s, TV Land — the cable network geared toward nostalgic older audiences — decided to lure the actor back to the silver screen. Instead of acting, though, TV Land convinced Mr. T to transition to reality television. Photo Courtesy: TV Land/YouTube
Titled I Pity the Fool, the reality program followed Mr. T as he traveled the country solving problems and giving advice. Although crafted in a similar vein to his motivational-speaking content, I Pity the Fool just didn't seem to resonate with contemporary audiences. It was canceled after six short episodes.Mr. T in 21st Century FilmsWith his commercial appearances still going strong but his television appearances slowing to a crawl, studio executives tried to bring Mr. T back to the feature-film industry. First, the actor was offered a cameo in The A-Team's feature film adaptation alongside his co-stars, but he turned it down. Ultimately, the show's stars didn't even make the final cut. Photo Courtesy: Laura Pearson-Smith/IMDb
In 2009, Mr. T actually accepted a feature-film appearance: the role of Officer Earl Devereaux in the animated film Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs. However, Mr. T declined to return for the 2013 sequel.Mr. T's British Clip ShowLike his Canadian television series might suggest, Mr. T found fame far outside the boundaries of the United States. In fact, the actor is quite famous in the United Kingdom. As a result, British television network BBC Three gave the star his own clip show from 2011 to 2013. Photo Courtesy: Sports Fools/YouTube
Titled World's Craziest Fools, the clip show features Mr. T as the presenter of all kinds of ridiculous and hilarious internet videos and CCTV footage. As you might be able to surmise by the title, the clips showcased people making fools of themselves (intentionally or not).Mr. T's Failed ProjectsOf all the projects Mr. T's name has been attached to throughout the years, not every one of them was lucky enough to be successful. Quite a few never even made it past the drawing board. Photo Courtesy: DIY Network
One of the most surprising instances was I Pity the Tool, a show on DIY Network following Mr. T renovating homes — it lasted one episode. Another is Mr. T: The Video Game, which was imagined as a cartoonish take on the actor's life that would see him fighting Nazis across the world. It was never completed and was subsequently abandoned.Mr. T on Dancing With the StarsMr. T is undoubtedly a huge star, so it makes sense that he was eventually sought out for ABC's hit dance competition series Dancing With the Stars in 2017. One of the last high-profile jobs for the '80s superstar, Mr. T was partnered up with Kym Henjavec during the show's 24th season. Photo Courtesy: ABC/YouTube
Competing alongside Saturday Night Live alum Chris Kattan, Olympic skater Nancy Kerrigan and actress Charo, Mr. T didn't make it very far into the show. He and his partner were voted off third, ending up in 10th place after just a few episodes of competition.Mr. T's Later YearsNow in his late 60s, Mr. T lives the life he deserves. It's the final transition for him: After a lifetime of hard work across film, television, sports and stage, the '80s icon now lives as a born-again Christian with a loving family and a comfortable lifestyle. Photo Courtesy: Gabriel Olsen/Getty Images
Happily married since 1971, Mr. T has three children: two daughters and a son (the latter from a previous marriage). One of his daughters makes her living as a comedian, performing under the name Erica Clark (after her mother's maiden name) instead of Erica T or Erica Tureaud.Mr. T TodayIn 2019, not much is seen or heard from Mr. T. He experienced a brief resurgence in popularity when the Snapchat-style Mr. T App was released in the mid-2010s, but — as with most things online — the chatter died down in no time at all. Photo Courtesy: Giles Turnbull/App Store
Truthfully, Mr. T has disappeared from the spotlight simply because he chose to. Being a present father and a loving husband is a noble goal, especially considering the fact that Mr. T was robbed of a father-son relationship when his father left his family all the way back in the 1970s.Where to Find Him on Social MediaThe best (and only) way to keep up with Mr. T today is to follow him on Twitter (@MrT) or YouTube. As is the case with many celebrities, social media provides the opportunity to receive updates from the man himself on a regular basis. Photo Courtesy: @MrT/Twitter
It's here that Mr. T will probably be the most active going forward — at least until the next Mr. T-aissance, whenever that may be. Not to mention, his tweets are truly quite enjoyable, even if he doesn't post that often. In the end, you shouldn't pity him — Mr. T is doing just fine. MORE FROM FAQTOIDS.COM

