

This Day in History... January 6, 1912

Birth of Danny Thomas

Performer and philanthropist Danny Thomas was born Amos Muzyad Yaqoob Kairouz on January 6, 1912, in Deerfield, Michigan.

Thomas was one of 10 children born to Lebanese immigrants. He got his start in entertainment in 1932 when he began performing on the Detroit radio program *The Happy Hour Club*.

In the 1940s, Thomas began performing on the radio show *The Bickersons*, which gave him his first national exposure. He also performed on *The Baby Snooks Show* and the NBC variety program *The Big Show*. Thomas appeared in two films in the late 1940s before joining the cast of *Call Me Mister* in 1951 and starring in *The Jazz Singer* in 1952.

Thomas got his big break in 1953 with the hit show *Make Room for Daddy* (later known as *The Danny Thomas Show*). Lasting for 11 seasons, the show was one of the most successful and long-running situation comedies on American television.

Thomas hosted *The Wonderful World of Burlesque* and *The Danny Thomas Hour* in the 1960s. He also found success as a producer on the shows *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, *The Andy Griffith Show*, *That Girl*, and *The Mod Squad*.

Early in his career, Thomas struggled to find work and needed to support his young family. He made a plea to St. Jude, the patron saint of the hopeless: "Show me my way in life, and I will build you a shrine." Within a year, he was a successful nightclub entertainer in Chicago.

Through his years of success, Thomas never forgot his promise to St. Jude. The idea for a children's hospital grew because Thomas felt "no child should die in the dawn of life." He expanded the center's mission to include research into serious childhood diseases. Thomas and his wife spent several years traveling the country to raise money for the hospital, which opened in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1962. In the years since, thousands of children have been treated at the facility at no cost, and scientific breakthroughs have improved survival rates from once-fatal diseases.

In addition to raising funds for the hospital, Thomas continued to work on television and in commercials. He worked until his death on February 6, 1991.



Stamp issued for Thomas's 100th birthday in 2012.



This stamp was issued for children's health awareness.

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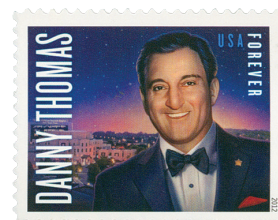
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