

Sunday, 28 September 2014

## Don Wilson

Year after year, Don Wilson was voted the best announcer on radio. Almost immediately after one such award, Wilson went on the air and made one of his most famous flubs, telling Jack Benny he had heard about his new suit from "Drear Pooson" (Drew Pearson was a famous columnist who also had a radio broadcast on ABC an hour before the Benny show).

Wilson announced on a number of shows over the years, but most people would be hard-pressed to name any other than the Jack Benny show. He joined Benny in April 1934. Like the announcers before him, Wilson was incorporated into the banter with the stars and cast. Unlike the others, Wilson had a gimmick—his bulk, which fit in very nicely with (eventually) having a product to endorse that was edible. And Wilson endorsed it lovingly; by contrast, Howard Claney shouted at listeners when working his Chevrolet plugs into earlier Benny broadcasts (in fairness to him, the sponsor may have demanded a hard sell).



Here's a full-page profile of Donzie, with accompanying photos, from the *Long Island Daily Press*, November 28, 1937.

## Smiling Salesman

By LYLE ROOKS

DON (SIX DELICIOUS FLAVORS) WILSON has a new home. He built it out in the San Fernando Valley, which is becoming a combination of Mecca and Valhalla to the twin industries, radio and motion pictures. Don's house is in a place called Longacres, which the real estate sign proclaims as a community of gentlemen's estates. That gives you an idea. The architecture is modified ranch-house—very modified and very attractive. The house sits congenially in a couple of acres of apricot trees as if it, too, had grown there. But many of the apricot trees are going to have to give way to gardens, great sweeps of lawn and pasturage for two horses. Two mind you.

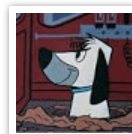
And all of this is the result of a laugh and the convincing sincerity of a pleasant voice. No wonder the genial Don beams more expansively than ever. The laugh and the sincerity made him famous. Radio announcers don't often become famous in their own right. They mostly remain just voices only vaguely attached to names. But everybody who turns a dial knows Don of NBC, who talks about that product with the "big red letters on the box" on Jack Benny's popular program. Don who exclaims about automobiles on the Hollywood Mardi Gras hour. Massive, friendly, laughing Don.

The laugh comes to him effortlessly. He must have been born with it and he's never separated from it for long, either professionally or in his leisure time. It is not a stage laugh. He actually gets red in the face at Benny's cracks. I know, I've seen him. Maybe that's why it is impossible to hear that laugh come chuckling over your radio without joining in on the chorus.

THE story of the development of the persuasive speaking voice is the story of an operatic baritone that didn't quite come off. Young Mr. Wilson confidently expected it was going to be an operatic baritone back in the days when any hack could sing on the radio. He lived in Denver, Col., and he warbled in a church choir, a la Lawrence Tibbett. He was also one of a trio which sang at Rotarian banquets and civic celebrations. His bread and butter was earned more practically as a salesman, until the business which provided it failed. Then Don and the trio got themselves jobs at a radio station. They sang anything which was demanded of them at any hour of the day or night without benefit of sponsor.

Eventually the resident manager of a grocery store chain claimed them. And when the urge to go to California

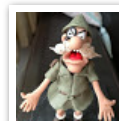
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Knox...and families of these comic artists can see these gems... - made with fimo clay I had ago and its not very easy to do...

1 hour ago

### Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



Vehicle Verification Centers of Mexico City will reopen in August with COVID

safety measures. - ©2020 fernandollercartoons.com

3 hours ago

### Movies with Michael

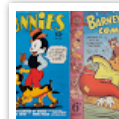


Cowboy Church #67 - Hello my friends and welcome back for another

service of cowboy church. Today's musical selection begins with Gene Autry singing "Dear Hearts and Gentle Pe..."

5 hours ago

### Termite Terrace headlines



Question for All You Cartoon Collectors! - OK so I've been doing some

looking around. Bosko apparently had a comic book and I'm wondering if any of you know of

attacked them as it does everyone sooner or later, he arranged a ninety-day contract with a San Francisco station.

"I got my first stage experience at the Curran Theater in San Francisco," Don explains. "So far as merit is concerned, it should have been my last. But it wasn't, because the sponsor liked the advertising value of displaying his banner in front of the theater. The ninety-day contract extended to a year and our trio went to Los Angeles.

"We played in neighborhood theaters wherever the company had a store in the vicinity. I've been on stages so small that when they got a piano on there wasn't room for me."

Don doesn't mind illusions to his bulk. He couldn't very well, and remain Benny's stooge.

He kept on singing into a microphone after the trio broke up. His was the sort of singing which was used to fill in gaps between regular programs. The continuation of that circumstance finally convinced him operatic ambitions were futile. The only tinge left may be observed in the fact that his intimate friends sometimes call him Pagliacci.

BEFORE radio was nationalized by great broadcasting companies, two of Los Angeles' major independent stations were owned by rival heads of automobile agencies. Don worked for thorn both in succession. The reason he was fired by the first was because he made the mistake of buying the make of car sold by the second. He should have known better. When he went to KFI, which is now NBC's Hollywood affiliate, they made an announcer of him. He started in by palavering in dulcet, Big Brother tones on a children's hour. It was soon realized such superior vocal salesmanship was wasted on children. Then he became a football announcer. That was better.

It was so much better he grew to be leading football announcer in the country, not excepting Graham "Oh look at the scenery!" McNamee. Don went to New York and Radio City. He is credited with the fastest eye-to-microphone description of special events and sports contests in radio. Football announcing came easy to him He had played on the University of Colorado team and he knew what he was talking about. He says it is pretty hard to remain popular while you are telling listeners about what happens on a gridiron, though. People are always wining in accusing you of taking sides no matter how impartial you try to be. When you're master of ceremonies on a program devoted exclusively to professional talent there's less they can object to.

Don Wilson became Jack Benny's M. C. six months before Benny changed to his present sponsor. They've worked together nearly four years and Wilson, by his own admission, goes a little soft when he talks about Benny, because Benny is "the greatest guy in the world."

"I remember something that happened the last time we went down to New York together." Don always talks about going "down" instead of back to New York. It may be unconscious condescension on his part. He explains that he has too much hay seed in his hair to want to live long in the big city.

"Jack was using the trip to catch up on some much needed rest. He hadn't been well and he was spending most of his time in bed. The train stopped for a while in a little burg in Kansas. Some of the inhabitants found out Benny was on the train and they came down to try to catch a glimpse of him. When Jack was told he got up, stuck his head out of the window and kidded with them as conscientiously as if they were the most important audience he had ever faced.

"A cynical press agent who was along watched him and said: 'That is what is known as annuity padding.' Well, I guess it was smart from a business point of view. But that wasn't why Jack did it. He is nice to people because he likes to be. He can't help being considerate of everyone and anyone."

THERE is some proof of that. Half an hour before the show goes on the air Benny strolls out on the broadcasting stage and entertains the people who have gathered to see as well as hear him. He is the only big star who does anything like that, and when you think how much he gets paid for half an hour, giving that much free gratis time is something. Don wouldn't want his bosses to know it but he would be willing to work for nothing on the Benny program. He has so much fun.

He has never been late to a radio broadcast in his life. In a business where every minute is worth a fabulous sum, being late must be a heinous crime. But he once missed a broadcast altogether and I daresay that is worse.

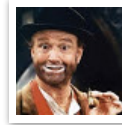
It was in New York and he was not ill or otherwise incapacitated. He just failed to notice a small item at the extreme right-hand side of the call board. So he was sitting comfortably in his hotel room late in the evening listening to the radio, of all things, when the telephone rang. A definitely annoyed executive shouted into his ear: "For Pete's sake, what's the matter with you? You're supposed to be announcing this program. You're on right now!" The famous voice was small indeed when Don replied: "Am I?" He forebode to add: "How am I doing?" But he sheepishly switched off his radio. He had been listening to his own program.



additional covers you could share! ...

14 hours ago

### Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog



Born on July 18, 1913 - Red Skelton - \*Today's post commences

with the Guzzler's Gin routine ...

1 day ago

### News From ME

Sorry... - As far as I know, I do not have any diseases. I just have too much to deal with right now so I won't be blogging much if at all. I'm postponing all the web...

1 day ago

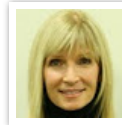
### Cartoon Research

In His Own Words: H.T. Kalmus on Disney in Technicolor - Suspended Animation #276 Many references may be found regarding two-strip Technicolor. I have been guilty of discussing Walter Lantz's King of Jazz (1930)...

2 days ago

### AFRTS Archive

Mary Turner 1985 - Mary Turner today Mary Turner really rocked the house.



Normally when any of the jocks got a reaction, it'd be split.

The ones that were really liked wou...

4 days ago

### The World of Knight



TONIGHT, 11:54 PM. - COPYRIGHT 2020 BY MILTON KNIGHT

4 days ago

### Yowp



Hanna-Barbera Birthday Did-You-Knows - 63 years ago today, some

forms were signed by George Sidney, Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera creating what eventually became the biggest TV cartoon operation i...

1 week ago

### Supervised By Fred Avery: Tex Avery's Warner Brothers Cartoons

Wabbit Twouble: A Small Addendum to An Outstanding Podcast -

This summer Don made a picture for Universal called “Behind the Mike.” He roars with laughter when he talks about it.

“I tell you it is so bad they hesitated to release it. You should see that big blimp on the screen, but I hope you don’t. He covers everybody.

“There’s a scene where he comes into a room and you can see him look down to see if he has overstepped his chalk marks on the floor. You know about how every motion picture actor has to pay attention to his chalk marks so he’ll keep in mike range or camera range or something. Only he isn’t supposed to be conspicuous about it. Well, they explained all that to the big blimp, but it was too much for him. In that scene he did get past his marks sure enough. And you can see him sort of back up and look down again with the darnedest, most puzzled expression on his moon face. Why they ever left it in is a mystery except that the rest of his performance in the picture is so much on a par it doesn’t matter.

“Now I know what I’ve inspected all along and if that picture gets out everybody else will know it too Don Wilson is no actor. He’d better stick to radio announcing.”


That’s all right by me if he continues to do it with a laugh.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [06:44](#)

Labels: [Jack Benny](#)




1 comment:

 **Graeme Cree** 30 September 2014 at 17:35

To football fans, Drear Pooson is an ex-Wide Receiver for the Dallas Cowboys.

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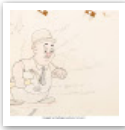
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Original animation drawing from Wabbit Twouble with color notations for the ink and paint department. Release date: 12/20/41 Availability: Looney Tunes Gol...  
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[Cartoon Logic Podcast](#) - And yet another distraction from this brick and mortar blog... I've entered the world of podcasting with renowned animation director and historian Bob Jaques...  
10 months ago

 **Likely Looney, Mostly Merrie**  
[That's all, folks!](#) - My posts have gotten thinner over the years. I'm aware of that. I've been hopeful for a long time, that I can remain active with blogging and sharing furth...  
1 year ago

 **Dr. Grob's Animation Review**  
[The Flying Man](#) - 'The Flying Man' is a very short absurdist film in which a man drops his coat to take a swim in mid air. Another man with a dog drops by, tries the same th...  
2 days ago

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