



Sunday, 13 November 2022

## Roy Glenn

Eddie Anderson's Rochester was a hugely popular part of the Jack Benny radio show. Most of his interactions on the show were with Benny character—natural, considering Rochester was a live-in employee—but in the 1950s, the programme's writers expanded on it.

They gave Rochester his own straight man.

The Benny show had grown up by that point that the era of blacks with cartoonish voices and silly names was out. An actor with a serious bass voice was cast, and perfect for the role of Rochester's buddy Roy. He was Roy Glenn.

Benny was remarkable in that he didn't hover all over his show. He trusted Anderson to be the focal point of whole scenes on the air before showing up, knowing there would be laughs. A number of these scenes involved dialogues with Roy, who set up Rochester's punch lines.

On the show, Benny also treated the Roy character with respect. If Roy did some housework, Jack avoided being cheap. Roy would get paid decently, perhaps the only character on the show that was. (The cheap gags could come out Rochester's mouth as a commentary on the situation, ensuring audience laughs).

Glenn had been on the Benny show before this, either playing a porter or a waiter. Jack also used him as a stand-in for Anderson; at least one rehearsal recording exists of him playing the Rochester part.

In his later years, Glenn played the father of both Sammy Davis, Jr. and Sidney Poitier, who had been an understudy in New York when Glenn was on stage there in the '40s.

Glenn had put in his time before being hired for the Benny show. His obituary on the front page of the *Los Angeles Sentinel* revealed he made his stage debut at age 17, singing in the chorus of the Mayan Theatre in Los Angeles in a show with Juanita Moore and Rex Ingram. His film debut was with Mario Lanza in "The Flame of New Orleans," followed by "The Jackie Robinson Story."

He talked about film roles in one of a series of columns on Hollywood by the *Pittsburgh Courier*. This was published July 30, 1960.

## Roy Glenn Feels More Negro Writers Equals More Negro Parts in Movies

BY CHES WASHINGTON

HOLLYWOOD—Pittsburg, Kan.-born Roy Glenn, one of the first-rate and most versatile of our actors, offers a somewhat different approach to the problems facing Negro performers and their lack of work in Movietown.

Roy said our biggest need to get more parts, is writers.

"If the writers put Negro characters in their stories, the directors will put Negro performers in the pictures," he believes.

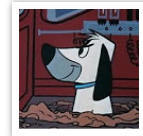
"Take, for example, the case of "Raisin the Sun," new being filmed," he says. "Just look at the tremendous amount of work for us that has come from that stage version, and now the film play.

"I think we have the talent, so the writers are our biggest need," he added.

Roy, the man with the booming, imposing voice, came to Los Angeles, Nov. 25, 1920. He got his first big break



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January 1940 - At the start of 1940, NBC had the TV audience in the Eastern U.S.—what little of it there was—all to itself. W2XBS on Channel 1 was the only station in...  
2 days ago

**Yowp**  
Whip Up Some Cereal -  
\*The Quick Draw McGraw Show\* was bought and paid for by Kellogg's, so the cereal maker made sure it had its imprint in the opening and closing animation. ...  
1 week ago

## Blogs to See

**The Exposure Sheet**  
The New (and Never Made) Flintstones Show - The Exposure Sheet is back after a little Labor Day break, and just as I promised, I introduce you to the first of several posts for what I call "Scrapped...  
55 minutes ago

**Cartoon Research**  
Let's Talk Terrytoons: Why We Don't See Them Anymore - My 30 years of trying to revive a mighty mouse, a pair of talking magpies and a very neurotic elephant.  
7 hours ago

in the movies in "Lydia Bailey."

GLENN IS CURRENTLY working in the new film, "Raisin in the Sun." But prior to that it has been almost a year since he got a screen call, which is typical of most of the Negro performers . . . with few exceptions. However, Roy gets lots of work in television film and series.

"My best teachers were directors," Roy said, when asked about his steady improvement in his acting ability.

Glenn thinks that the studios use white actresses to play the role of fair-complexioned colored girls because we don't have a topflight fair Negro girl who is top-rated. And that's why they use white girls they already have under contract, he explained.

But Roy asked us to reiterate:

"Our greatest need is writers . . . good ones . . . like the author of 'Raisin in the Sun,'" he concluded.

Glenn had to deal with tragedy. His mother Lela was shot to death while kneeling in prayer in during an evening service in her church in 1958. The bullet was fired during a bar fight across the street.

His obituary in the *New York Amsterdam News* of March 20, 1971 didn't mention the Benny show, nor his breakthrough emceeing job on KTTV's *Sepia Spotlight* series in 1954, nor a 1955 dramatic and singing performance on a racial-equality episode of *Medic*. But it did refer to a controversial show.

Glenn was on the CBS-TV version of *Amos 'n' Andy*. Despite the casting of skilled black actors, the programme had acquired a lot of baggage from its blackface radio days. Black activists weren't happy with what they saw as bad-influence or over-the-top characters though, by all accounts, actor Tim Moore enjoyed playing the blustering con artist, the Kingfish. What did Glenn think of attempts (eventually successful) to shame it off the air? His obituary story in the *New Amsterdam News* of March 20, 1971 has the answer.

## Roy Glenn Dies In California

By SARA SLACK

Veteran actor in 42 films Roy Edwin Glenn, Jr., was buried Wednesday in Inglewood Cemetery in Inglewood, California surrounded, to the end, by those he loved most, members of his family and show business colleagues. He was 56.

He died Thursday evening in his art-filled home in Los Angeles' fashionable Baldwin Hills section. During his seizure, a doctor was called. He summoned an ambulance, but Glenn was dead when the ambulance arrived. He had said for several years he had a heart condition. Friends in Los Angeles said he had been dieting and exercising heavily in preparation for a role in an upcoming film. Monday, they said he complained of having severe chest pains.

A memorial service was held for him Tuesday night at the Harrison and Ross Mortuary in Los Angeles. Last year he was elected national recording secretary of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. Six AFTRA members served as honorary pallbearers.

### Serious Study

A native of Pittsburgh, Kansas, Glenn first wanted to be a draftsman and later decided to become a lawyer. Possessing great talents for playing the piano and singing, he headed his own singing group in high school. Members remained together and went on to star in supper clubs and appear in films.

His first acting opportunity came on a WPA project when he was given a role in the Federal Theatre production of "John Henry." He then began serious study winning spots on radio, in movies and on television. He has appeared in numerous TV commercials over the past three years.

His superb acting talents were first brought to public attention when he played the role of Maribeau, the general with the livid scars, in the film, "Lydia Bailey." He is well-known for playing the role of the prosecuting attorney in the TV series "Amos 'n' Andy." The show was removed from the airways after numerous civil rights groups objected to the stereotypes played by the Black cast.

### His Reaction

Asked his reaction to the show's being banned by Blacks, Glenn answered:

"I disagree with these critics. Many of our people act just like Amos and Andy. That program, in part, was a true portrayal of many of us."

Glenn was probably best known on Broadway for his appearance in the long-playing "Golden Boy" and in motion pictures as Sidney Poitier's father in "Guess Who's Coming To Dinner." His lists of acting credits includes [sic] forty-two films.

He is survived by a wife, Mrs. Roy Glenn, Jr.; a son, Darryl Ward Glenn, who lived with him; a daughter, Renatta Darlene Glenn of Detroit; another son, Roy Glenn, III and five grandchildren.



### News From ME

**On a Brief Hiatus** - In case you haven't figured out, this blog is closed for a few days while I tend to matters that need tending-to and would be of no interest to anyone. I a...  
21 hours ago

### Fernando Liera Cartoons

**Russia strikes Ukrainian ports near NATO border ahead of talks to resume grain deal.** - ©2023 fernandollera.com  
1 day ago

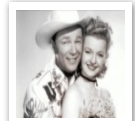
### AFRTS Archive



**Gary Owens**  
1969 - .  
From the "familiar love theme"

to the ongoing silliness. Gary did some wonderful radio. Gary's last big job was the announcer on AntennaTV. On t...  
1 day ago

### Movies with Michael



**Cowboy Church #240** - Hello my friends and welcome

back for another service of Cowboy Church. Today's musical selection begins with Roy Rogers and Dale Evans with "The Bible ...  
1 day ago

### Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog

**The 2023 Cinecon Is On!** - \*Silent movie fans in Southern California, enjoy the return of the Cinecon! The 59th Cinecon will bring big screen fun to the Old Town Music Hall (home of...  
4 days ago

### Mark Kausler's CatBlog

**Mabel's Cops** - This time out the "Now Listen, Mabel" strips are from 11-24 to 12-6-1919. Jimmie Doozinberry is jealous of Policeman Tom Walsh who turns out to be Mabel's ...  
5 days ago

The validity, and possible negativity, of any kind of stereotypes and whether they should be seen or shunned is far out of the scope of this blog. Suffice it to say that having a black character on radio or television who was as a friend and ordinary guy, especially in days of segregation in some parts of the U.S., was something positive. It is a credit to Jack Benny that he recognised it, and still managed to turn it into comedy.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [06:51](#)



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

## 3 comments:



**Mark Kausler** 13 November 2022 at 13:15

No mention of Roy Glenn's cartoon credits? His best remembered character was the Scarecrow in the Jasper Puppetoon series. He also played parts for Tex Avery such as the "World's Smallest Pygmy" in "Half-Pint Pygmy". He did a lot of work in cartoons.

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**Yowp** 14 November 2022 at 04:54

No. This post has nothing to do with cartoons. This is not a filmography.

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**Anonymous** 18 February 2023 at 22:28

Can anyone tell me about Mr. Glenn's son Darryl Ward Glenn, is he still alive?

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**Prydain on Film**



1972  
Interview  
with  
[Chronicles  
of Prydain](#)  
author

[Lloyd Alexander, Illustrator  
Evaline Ness and Ann  
Durell - from the Free  
Library Rare Book  
Department YouTube  
channel,](#)  
*1 month ago*

**Pete Hale Blog**

[New Blog!](#) - I now have a  
new blog, called The  
Golden Age of Animation,  
which I hope to be a  
Cartoon Research-like  
place for a bunch of writers,  
mainly me, the head w...  
*2 months ago*

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