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Linda Hope Previews Bob Hope Stamp Image today *Stamp to be dedicated May 29, 2009 in California*

A high-resolution image of the stamp is available to media only by emailing mark.r.saunders@usps.gov

NEW YORK — Linda Hope joined U.S. Postal Service Governor Katherine C. Tobin today to preview the stamp image depicting Hope's father, iconic entertainer Bob Hope. The ceremony took place during festivities to rename the Ellis Island Research Library to the Bob Hope Memorial Library. The stamp dedication ceremony to commemorate Bob Hope on a First-Class Commemorative stamp will take place May 29 in California on what would have been his 106th birthday. The stamp will be available nationwide that day.

"What better venue to preview the stamp image that immortalizes the achievements of one of America's true entertainment treasures than Ellis Island, where Bob Hope first set foot on American soil, and where today the National Park Service is dedicating a library in his honor," said Tobin.

Leslie Townes Hope was born May 29, 1903, in Eltham, England. He moved to the United States when he was only four years old and lived in Cleveland, OH, with his parents and six brothers. In 1920, he was granted U.S. citizenship by virtue of his father's naturalization.

"The naming of the Bob Hope Memorial Library and the commemorative U.S. postage stamp are wonderful tributes to my father who arrived at this isle of hope 100 years ago," said Linda Hope, vice president of the Bob Hope Legacy, the organization which is providing materials for the temporary and permanent exhibits at the Library bearing her father's name. "He fully achieved the promise of America and dedicated his life to the service of his adopted country."

"His gift," she continued, "which we see in the jokes throughout this exhibit, was to make people laugh. And he shared that gift for 50 years with the men and women who were far from home, defending the principles we cherish. My mother and I, along with our family, look forward to the release of the Bob Hope stamp in conjunction with his birthday on May 29."

Joining Tobin and Hope at the ceremony were Eliot L. Engel, U.S. Rep. (D-NY); Cynthia Garrett, superintendent of the Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island; and, Norman Liss, Chairman, Ellis Island Development Committee, Ellis Island Restoration Commission.

Kazuhiko Sano of Mill Valley, CA, worked under the direction of art director Derry Noyes of Washington, DC, to create the stamp image. The image is based on a composite of 1980s photographs of Hope.

Bob Hope (1903-2003) devoted his life to making people laugh. He is most known for his unwavering commitment — from World War II through Operation Desert Storm — to supporting morale by entertaining military personnel serving overseas. He had a top rated television show on NBC, and also found success on the live stage, in radio shows and in motion pictures. He became one of the most honored and beloved performers of the 20th century.

Hope enjoyed the spotlight, even at an early age. As a boy, he often entertained friends and family with his amusing impression of actor-comedian Charlie Chaplin. In his teens, he tried amateur boxing under

the name of Packy East, but he decided to pursue other employment when he “was not only being carried out of the ring, but into the ring.”

Hope’s natural talent for singing and dancing eventually led to touring on the vaudeville circuit. In the early stages of his career, he teamed up with several dancing partners, but he received the best audience feedback when adding jokes to his act, and so he decided to try it alone as a comedian and master of ceremonies.

Hope reached the pinnacle of vaudeville success in 1931 and 1932, playing the venerable Palace Theatre in New York City. In 1932, Hope got a part in the Broadway musical revue “Ballyhoo.” The next year, he gained major recognition playing the amiable, wisecracking Huckleberry Haines in the Broadway production of “Roberta.” During this time, he met and married singer Dolores DeFina, a marriage that lasted the rest of his life.

On stage, he sang to Eve Arden in the 1936 Ziegfeld Follies, introducing the song “I Can’t Get Started” by Ira Gershwin and Vernon Duke. His performance in Follies led to another successful role in “Red, Hot, and Blue,” also in 1936, with Ethel Merman and Jimmy Durante. Hope made guest appearances on several radio shows in the early and mid-1930s, and in 1938 he began headlining his own NBC program, The Pepsodent Show. This highly rated series featured an opening monologue of topical jokes — the influence of which can still be seen on late-night television talk shows.

Hope impressed audiences and producers in his first major film role, as Buzz Fielding in The Big Broadcast of 1938. With his co-star Shirley Ross, he performed what would become his trademark song: “Thanks for the Memory.” Hope was given a film contract with Paramount Pictures and went on to star in more than 50 feature films, including Road to Singapore and six more pictures in the Road series with Bing Crosby. Over the years, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences recognized Hope with two special awards (1940 and 1944), two honorary awards (1952 and 1965), and the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award (1959).

In April 1950, Hope headlined an Easter Sunday television special for NBC — “Star Spangled Revue” — a live broadcast from New York. For almost five decades after that, he hosted nearly 300 comedy-variety TV specials for NBC and made hundreds of guest appearances on other shows. He was master of ceremonies for more Academy Awards® presentations (19) than anyone else, including the first live telecast on March 19, 1953, and the first color broadcast in 1966.

Although Hope never officially served in the U.S. Armed Forces, he dedicated a significant part of his life to entertaining America’s men and women in uniform, starting in 1941 and continuing through the Persian Gulf War five decades later. After giving hundreds of performances overseas, he earned the nickname “G.I. Bob” and in 1997 became the first person recognized by the U.S. Congress as an “honorary veteran of the United States Armed Forces.”

Hope’s thousands of honors also included the Congressional Gold Medal and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Among his many friends were several U.S. presidents, with whom he often played golf for charity. Bob Hope died at his home in Toluca Lake, CA, on July 27, 2003, two months after his 100th birthday. For more information on Hope’s life, visit: www.bobhope.com.

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