
Obituaries

Actor, Comedian Jan Murray; Hosted TV's 'Treasure Hunt'

Associated Press

Jan Murray, 89, one of the fabled generation of comics who rose from the Catskills to prime time TV, tickling fans of the 1950s game show "Treasure Hunt," died July 2 at his home in Beverly Hills, Calif. No cause of death was reported.

"Treasure Hunt" ran from 1956 to 1959 in the daytime and in prime time, first on ABC and later on NBC. The contestant who won a quiz picked from among treasure chests, which contained anything "from a head of cabbage to a check for a large sum of money," according to the book "The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows."

Mr. Murray moved to Los Angeles in 1965 to pursue an acting career. He had roles in such films as "A Man Called Dagger," "Tarzan and the Great River," "The Busybody" and "Thunder Alley," a 1967 film that starred Annette Funicello.

He also served as a guest host on "The Tonight Show" and did many guest shots on 1960s and '70s TV shows, including "Love, American Style," "The Name of the Game" and "The Man From U.N.C.L.E."

Born Murray Janofsky in New York in 1916, Mr. Murray was inspired to become a performer when he memorized vaudeville acts to repeat at home for his ailing mother. He then honed his performing skills at Catskills resorts that catered to Jewish vacationers.



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Jan Murray, right, works with producer Mike Dutton and production assistant Elise Anderson in New York in 1953. Murray acted in films and on television.

As a resort's resident tumbler, he was expected to entertain guests all day, not just on the stage at night, he told the Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles in 2002.

"In the morning, the fat ladies in the exercise room," Mr. Murray said. "I'd pass by and do shtick." But it wasn't tiring, he insisted.

"Until I was 80, I wasn't exhausted," he said. "There's no medicine like being on stage hearing people laugh."

Among the other veterans of

that vanished show business training ground were Mel Brooks, Red Buttons, Sid Caesar and the late Buddy Hackett.

Mr. Murray went on to host a string of game shows in the 1950s, including "Dollar a Second," before moving west.

His marriage to Pearl Cohen Murray ended in divorce.

Survivors include his wife of 57 years, Kathleen "Toni" Mann Murray; four children; eight grandchildren; and two great-grandsons.