



Beloved television personality Edward Leo McMahon, Lowell High School Class of 1940, kept his feet planted firmly on the ground while reaching for the stars.

Born in Detroit in 1923 but raised by his grandparents in Lowell, McMahon always considered Lowell his hometown. McMahon attended Lowell High School, where he co-wrote an advice column for the high school's newspaper, The Review. He also belonged to the Boy Officers Brigade, before graduating from LHS in 1940.

McMahon landed his first broadcasting job at WLLH in Lowell. He enlisted in the U.S. Marines during World War II, earned his wings at the Pensacola Naval Base, and served as a combat pilot. He later trained other fighter pilots. After the war, he returned to school as a speech and drama major at Catholic University.

After graduating from college, McMahon settled in Philadelphia and landed jobs as a writer, producer, and host of several local programs, including a cooking show and early morning show. In 1950, he made his national television debut as a clown on CBS' "The Big Top."

Then duty called again. McMahon re-enlisted in the military during the Korean War, flying some 85 combat missions and eventually achieving the rank of colonel.

His big television break came in 1958, when producers tabbed McMahon to be the announcer and sidekick to host Johnny Carson on the ABC show "Who Do You Trust?" The pair honed their chemistry over the next three years, with McMahon playing the straight man to Carson's quips. When NBC hired Carson to host "The Tonight Show," he teamed once again with his "right-hand man" McMahon. During his 30-year run on "The Tonight Show," McMahon's booming voice, hearty laugh, and nightly trademark introduction "Heeere's Johnny!" made him an American institution.

McMahon added to his notoriety, hosting a variety of game shows, television specials, and commercials. He introduced America to new talent as the genial host of "Ed McMahon's Star Search." In addition to his numerous television appearances, McMahon appeared on Broadway and in several films.

Over the years, he worked for many charitable organizations, including the St. Jude's Ranch for Children in Boulder City, Nevada, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the United Negro College Fund, and the Michael McMahon Memorial Sports Complex at St. Jude's.

McMahon died this past summer after an extended illness.