

Hume Cronyn

Hume Blake Cronyn Jr. OC (July 18, 1911 - June 15, 2003) was a Canadian-American actor and writer. He appeared in many stage productions, television and film roles throughout his career, and has garnered numerous accolades, including three Primetime Emmy Awards and two Tony Award, as well as a nominations for an Academy Award and a Golden Globe Award. In 1986, he and his wife actress Jessica Tandy were presented with the Kennedy Center Honor.

His great-uncle, Benjamin Jr., was both a prominent citizen and early mayor of London, Ontario, but was later indicted for fraud and fled to Vermont. During his tenure in London, he built a mansion called Oakwood, which currently serves as the head office of the Info-Tech Research Group. Cronyn was also a cousin of Canadian-born theater producer, Robert Whitehead, and a first cousin of the Canadian-British artist Hugh Verschoyle Cronyn GM (1905-1996).¹

Cronyn was the first Elmwood School boarder in Ottawa (at the time Elmwood was called Rockcliffe Preparatory School) and boarded at Elmwood between 1917 and 1921. After leaving Elmwood, Cronyn went to Ridley College in St. Catharines, and McGill University in Montreal, where he became a member of The Kappa Alpha Society. Early in life, Cronyn was an amateur featherweight boxer, having the skills to be nominated for Canada's 1932 Olympic Boxing team.²

The couple also appeared in many memorable dramatic stage, film and television outings, including *The Seventh Cross* (1944), *The Green Years* (1946), *The Gin Game* (1977), *Honky Tonk Freeway* (1981), *The World According to Garp* (1982), *Cocoon* (1985), the television film *Foxfire* (1987), **batteries not included* (1987), *Cocoon: The Return* (1988), *To Dance with the White Dog* (1993) and *Camilla* (1994).

Cronyn had an association with the Stratford Festival as a member of both the acting company and its board of governors. He played Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* in 1976, and debuted his play *Foxfire* in 1980.³ The play would later move to Broadway (and won Tandy a Best Actress Tony award), and a film version was made in 1987.⁴

In 1990 he won an Emmy award for his role in the TV Movie *Age-Old Friends*.⁵ His later appearances included the films *The Pelican Brief* (1993), *Marvin's Room* (1996) and the Showtime TV film *12 Angry Men* (1997).

Cronyn's first marriage was to the philanthropist Emily Woodruff in late 1934 or early 1935. They shared a "lavender marriage" and never lived together. Woodruff insisted that the marriage remain a secret because of her lesbian relationships. They quietly divorced in 1936.⁶⁷

Cronyn married the actress Jessica Tandy in 1942. The couple had a daughter, Tandy, and a son, Christopher.

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Cronyn and Tandy lived in the Bahamas, then at a lakeside estate in Pound Ridge, New York, and, finally, in Easton, Connecticut. #12#93; Jessica Tandy died in 1994, aged 85, from ovarian cancer.

In 1979, Cronyn was inducted into the American Theater Hall of Fame. #91;15#93; #91;16#93; On July 11, 1988, he was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Canada, giving him the post nominal letters "OC" for life. #91;17#93;

Cronyn was inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame in 1999. #91;18#93; #91;19#93; He also received the 125th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada Medal in 1992 and the Canadian version of the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002. #91;20#93;

He was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree (LLD) by the University of Western Ontario on October 26, 1974. His wife, Jessica Tandy, was given the same degree on the same day. #91;21#93;

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