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FILM ARCHIVISTS ANNOUNCE SEPTEMBER 29 AS NATIONAL SILENT MOVIE DAY



Silent film stars Harold Lloyd and Mildred Davis, courtesy of Harold Lloyd Entertainment

Apr. 20, 2021 – A group of film archivists with a passion for silent movies has established September 29 as National Silent Movie Day—an annual day to celebrate silent film history and raise awareness about the race to preserve surviving silent films. With an official proclamation from National Day Archives naming the day, the inaugural National Silent Movie Day will be held on Wednesday, September 29, 2021.

Established by film archivists Chad Hunter, Executive Director of Video Trust and Director of the Pittsburgh Silent Film Society; Brandee B. Cox, a Senior Film Archivist at the Academy Film Archive and Steven K. Hill, Motion Picture Archivist at the UCLA Film & Television

Archive, the trio met virtually in January to discuss the need to raise greater awareness about silent film history. "It seems like there is a national day for almost everything - and we thought, why not silent movies? We were actually sort of surprised there wasn't already one," said Hunter.

Decades before the popularity of television and the age of computers, cell phones and Netflix, silent movies reigned supreme. For roughly 40 years between 1890 and 1930, going to see silent movies in theaters was the most popular form of entertainment in the world, and made global stars of Charlie Chaplin, Rudolph Valentino, Greta Garbo, Paul Robeson, and Anna May Wong.

Yet tragically an estimated 80% of all American silent feature films are now considered "lost" forever. Films from the silent period were printed on flammable nitrocellulose film stock, and rather than risk deadly fires, theaters and studios often destroyed or reclaimed silver content from prints after their theatrical runs were completed. Nitrate film decays over time as well, and archives around the world are in a race with time to preserve the few silent films that still exist.

Suzanne Lloyd, granddaughter of the great silent film comedian and actor Harold Lloyd, has been managing his legacy of romantic comedy films for 50 years and agrees that silent movies deserve a national day of celebration. "We at Harold Lloyd Entertainment are absolutely delighted to help announce—on Harold's 128th birthday—the first annual National Silent Movie Day. Archives and theatres from around the world have championed preserving and screening important films, and in doing so, have kept the vibrant and remarkable silent film tradition alive. This is a wonderful event that Harold would be so proud and honored to be a part of, and I am very happy to be able to represent Harold on National Silent Movie Day."

"Anyone can participate in National Silent Movie Day—you can ask your local art house cinema to show a silent movie with live music; you can host a virtual watch party; make a social media post about your favorite silent film or star; or organize a petition to help save a silent movie or silent movie landmark—the possibilities are endless," said Cox.

To find out more about National Silent Movie Day and how to participate, visit www.nationalsilentmovieday.org.

Press materials at: <https://www.nationalsilentmovieday.org/press-materials>