

Duke's Legacy Finds a Home at USC

Los Angeles, California, November 3, 2011 — The world's largest collection of John Wayne memorabilia goes on view to the public with the opening of "The Wayne Collection" a unique exhibit and lounge space at the USC School of Cinematic Arts.



On November 11, 2011 students and the public will have an opportunity to experience the golden age of film at USC, with the opening of The Wayne Collection, a dedicated space within the School of Cinematic Arts. The Wayne Collection will house portions of the rotating collection of film memorabilia from the 50-year career of motion picture icon, John Wayne, fondly known as "Duke."

In a lounge space on the second floor of the USC School of Cinematic Arts, visitors will be able to relax and view original movie posters from all but one of John Wayne's 152 films. The total poster collection contains over 6,000 pieces. Highlights will include a poster from John Wayne's 1939 break-out hit, *Stagecoach*, beautifully designed foreign posters, and pieces by renowned artists such as Norman Rockwell, Thomas Hart Benton and Alberto Vargas.

Wardrobe items will be on display, giving the public a chance to see vests, boots, hats and chaps worn by John Wayne in various movies such as *Hondo*, *The Green Berets* and *Big Jake*. Scripts, press books, novels and video elements will also be on view.

This window into film history would not exist without the efforts of John Wayne's eldest son, Michael. Michael Wayne began acquiring memorabilia from his father's films in 1977, after he realized his father had not saved anything from his many years in motion pictures. For the next 18 years until his death in 2003, Michael Wayne collected both foreign and domestic film posters, advertising materials, costumes and promotional items.

"Dad was always looking ahead, and he didn't bother to save things," Wayne explained in a 1995 interview with Marie Moneysmith for the *Franklin Mint Almanac*. "It wasn't until 1976 that it occurred to me that we had nothing — no posters, no lobby cards, none of the paper that's usually associated with a movie. And that's when I started collecting."

Wayne focused his search solely on items from his father's career. In addition to purchasing pieces at auctions, memorabilia conventions, and yard sales, he received items from fans and well-wishers, eventually acquiring the world's largest assortment of John Wayne memorabilia.

Hoping someday to donate his collection to a museum, Wayne was careful in preserving its assets. He had storage drawers specially designed, allowing posters to lie flat, separated by acid-free paper, rather than plastic sleeves. When not in rotation at The Wayne Collection, the portfolio is stored within temperature controlled vaults in Hollywood, California and is available to historians and scholars for research purposes.

John Wayne's love for USC and the years he spent there as a member of the Sigma Chi fraternity made the university a natural choice for The Wayne Collection. Michael Wayne's widow, Gretchen Wayne explains, "Establishing The Wayne Collection was a way for the Wayne family to honor John Wayne's contribution to filmmaking, as well as Michael Wayne's efforts to preserve his father's legacy."

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