



Talk show host Johnny Carson shares a laugh with his audience of friends and family during the final taping of the "Tonight Show" in Burbank, Ca., in this May 22, 1992 file photo. Carson landed the top spot, as you might have guessed. But deeper down the ranking of "The 50 Greatest TV Icons," you may find a name that surprises you (or even makes you scratch your head). Which is part of the fun. (AP Photo/Douglas C. Pizac,File)

Carson Tops 'TV's Greatest Icons' List

By FRAZIER MOORE – 10 hours ago

NEW YORK (AP) — It doesn't take a psychic in a bejeweled turban to figure out that Johnny Carson landed the top spot. But deeper down the ranking of "The 50 Greatest TV Icons," you may find a name that surprises you (or even makes you scratch your head). Which is part of the fun.

The list, released to the Associated Press, was compiled by cable's TV Land network and Entertainment Weekly magazine.

It's the source of a two-hour TV Land special airing Friday at 8 p.m. EST (and is also featured in the issue of Entertainment Weekly appearing on newsstands the same day). The special counts down from Larry Hagman (No. 50) to Carson, with mini-profiles of each "icon" in turn.

But what's a "TV icon" anyway?

Someone who "jumps off the screen into your home," says Henry Winkler, who is ranked 32nd, while Regis Philbin (No. 27) says, "If you hang around long enough, they call you an icon."

Along with human TV stars, the list contains a pooch (Lassie), a Muppet frog (Kermit), a cartoon dad (Homer Simpson) and a full-blown comedy troupe (the original Not Ready for Primetime Players from "Saturday Night Live").

There's one "Friend" (Jennifer Aniston) and two current late-night hosts (David Letterman and Jon Stewart made the cut, but Carson's successor, Jay Leno, did not). TV comedy trailblazer Milton Berle is on the list, though not his contemporary, Sid Caesar.

Of course, maybe you've got your own ideas. During the broadcast, you'll be invited to text-message your choice for the No. 1 "TV icon," with the audience consensus revealed at show's end.

On the Net:

- <http://www.tvland.com>
- <http://www.ew.com>

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