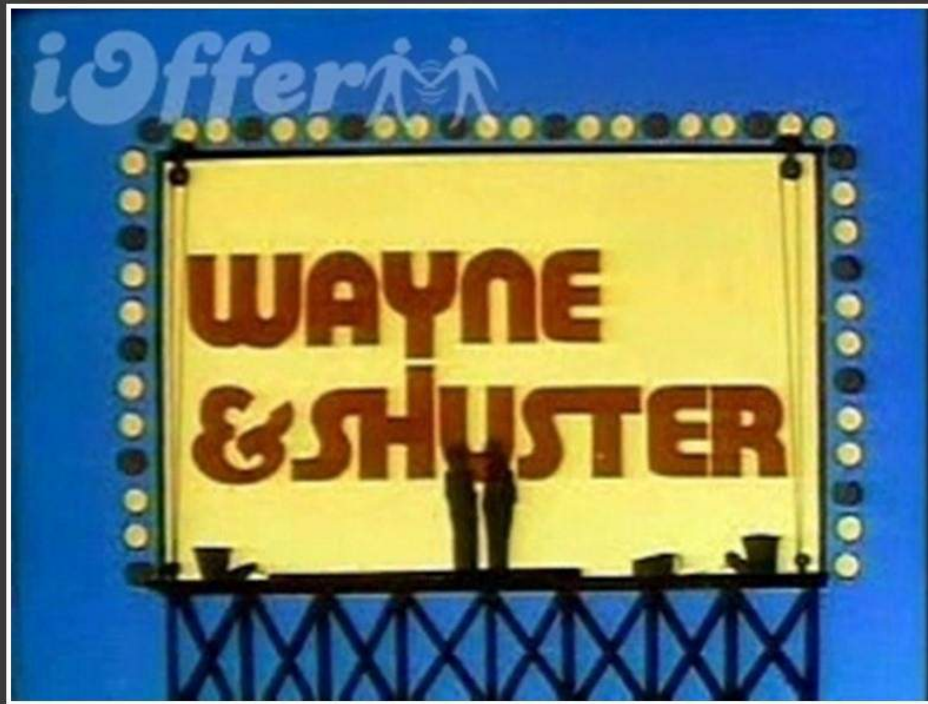


BASEBALL IN WAYNE AND SHUSTER

Maxwell I. Kates, CPA, CA
Canadian Baseball History Conference
Saturday, November 9, 2019
London, Ontario



Wayne and Shuster Opening Credits, 1974 to 1980



For half a century, Johnny Wayne and Frank Shuster fronted one of the most popular and memorable comedy acts in Canadian history.

Their genre was 'literary comedy,' spoofs and satires which fused literary classics with contemporary popular culture

Originally appeared in the (Houston) Pecan Park Eagle, October 11, 2018



Shakespeare's Influence On Wayne and Shuster:

"Western Hamlet"

"The Hassle at the Castle"
(Macbeth)

"Rinse the Blood Off My Toga"
(Julius Caesar)



At the conclusion of "The Hassle at the Castle," Officers Lamamour (Wayne) and Macphee (Shuster) discover William Shakespeare hiding in the bushes and writing a play at the Battle of Birnam Wood

What to name the play?



Macphee: All's Well That Ends Well

Lamamour: A Comedy of Errors

Shakespeare: Macbeth

M&L: "Macbeth? As you like it!"

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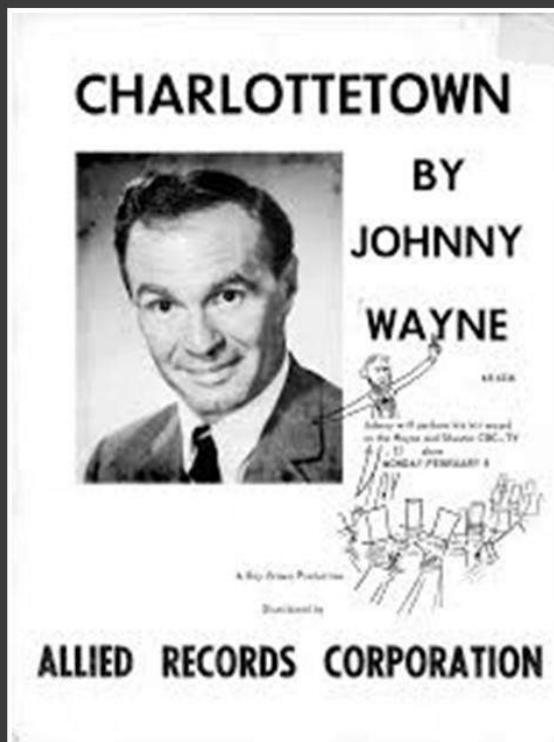
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**DO NOT ADJUST YOUR
MONITOR,
IT IS ONLY THE MACBETH**

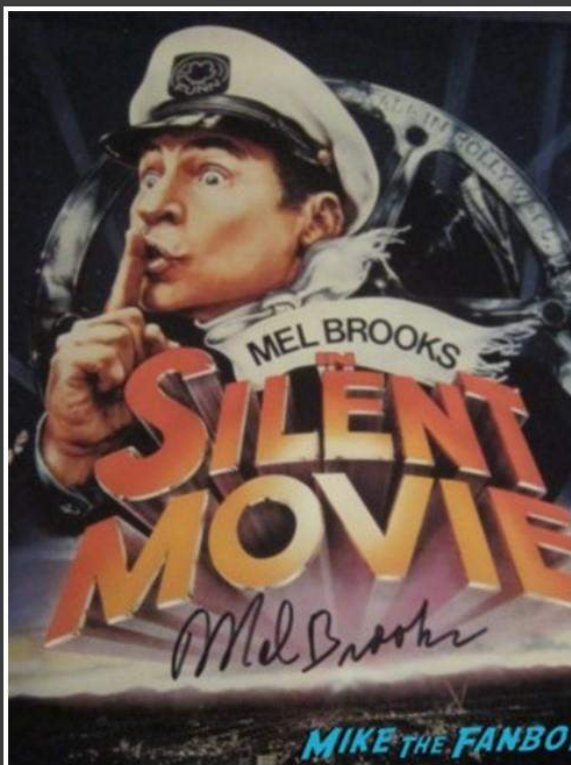


Wayne and Shuster was also about building their vision of Canada



Both Johnny Wayne and Frank Shuster hailed from immigrant families at a time Canada consisted of “two solitudes.”

Wayne and Shuster envisioned a progressive and multicultural Canada where everybody belonged irrespective of ethnic or geographic identity



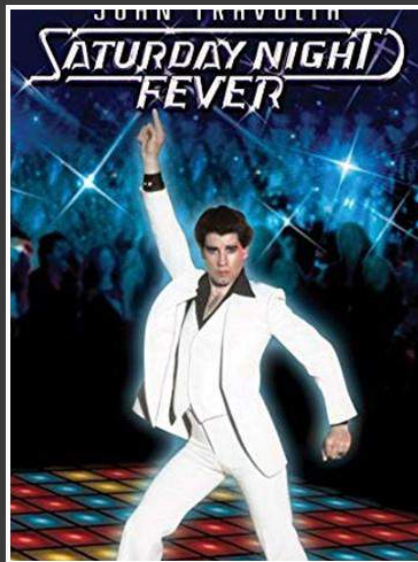
One of the ways Wayne and Shuster accomplished this was by bringing ethnic references into their material.

The idea was that it would be perfectly acceptable for people to be comfortable displaying attributes of their ethnic identity and still be Canadian.

It was a time when many American comedians were reluctant to bring their heritage into their acts.



In 1978, Wayne and Shuster aired "Saturday Night Feeble"



Shuster played Manjack Wolf

Wayne played John Ffolta



Ffolta is Yiddish for "all washed up," as in laundry

John Ffolta, a crossing guard, becomes "the world's first 84 year old sex symbol" and his dance craze, inspired by 'the Hustle,' was 'the Shlep'

Six months later, the dance craze is over



JOHN FAFOLTA
ALL WASHED UP



**FRANK
SHUSTER**

Born September 5, 1916,
Toronto, Ontario

Raised in Niagara Falls,
Windsor, and Detroit where
his family operated a series of
theatres and cinemas



JOHNNY WAYNE

Born May 28, 1918 in Toronto, Ontario (as Lou Weingarten)

Raised in Kensington Market where he developed a reputation as a prankster



Wayne and Shuster met in the Boy Scouts and performed together at Harbord Collegiate and in UC Follies (University of Toronto)

Hosted Javex Wife Preservers on CFRB 1010 in Toronto in 1941

Hired by the CBC in 1942



Wayne and Shuster served in His Majesty's Army during the Second World War before returning to CBC Radio in 1945.

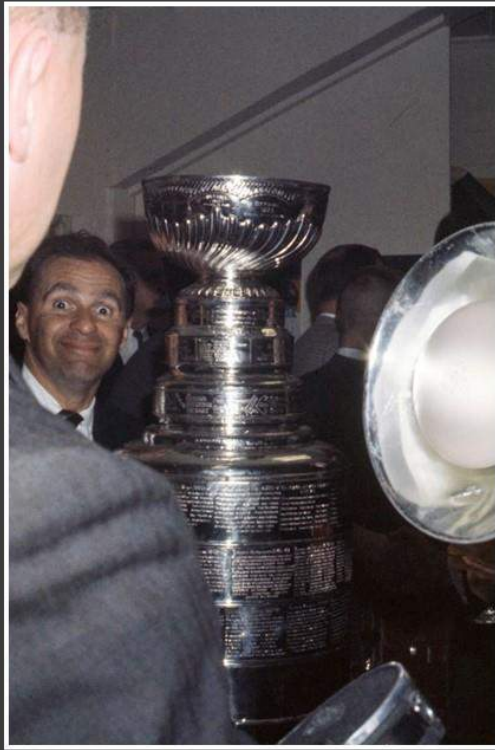
In 1954, they appeared in their first CBC television special



In 1958, Wayne and Shuster made their first of 67 appearances on the Ed Sullivan Show, setting a record among human performers.

In 1961, they hosted "Holiday Lodge" as a summer replacement series for Jack Benny

When offered to move to the United States, Wayne and Shuster chose to remain in



Wayne and Shuster were not baseball fans

Shuster was an avid golfer and Wayne's favourite spectator sports were football and hockey

Wayne and Shuster felt that baseball was a good way to appeal to American audiences when they went on Ed Sullivan

For their first appearance on Ed Sullivan, Wayne and Shuster introduced a sketch called "Shakespearean Baseball." An adaptation of "Casey at the Bat" recited in iambic pentameter, "Shakespearean Baseball" stars Shuster as the unnamed manager of the Stratford team opposite Wayne as "the noblest catcher of them all," the Mighty Yogi. Mired in a slump, Yogi is hitless in his last ten games, batting

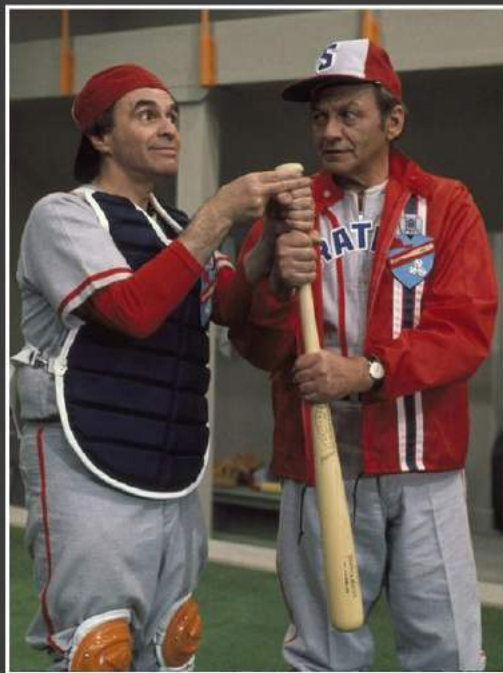


The original Shakespearean Baseball sketch, 1958

an anemic .208. His manager expressed dismay by lamenting “to think he led the league in RBIs / Now he reads the record book and cries.”

Yogi introduces himself by parodying Hamlet with the monologue, “Oh, what a rogue and bush league slob am I!” Shakespeare references and puns abound throughout the script; the basemen are “Sam the 1st, Bill the 2nd, and Richard the 3rd.” When inspecting a bat, Yogi channels his inner Macbeth by asking “Is this a Slugger I see before me?” And when Yogi learns the game is being televised, he qualms, “TV or not TV, that is not the question!”

The sketch reaches its climactic scene in the bottom of the 9th. Stratford is down by a run with one away. As Macduff strides to the plate, Yogi cheers, “Lay on Macduff! And watch out for that breaking



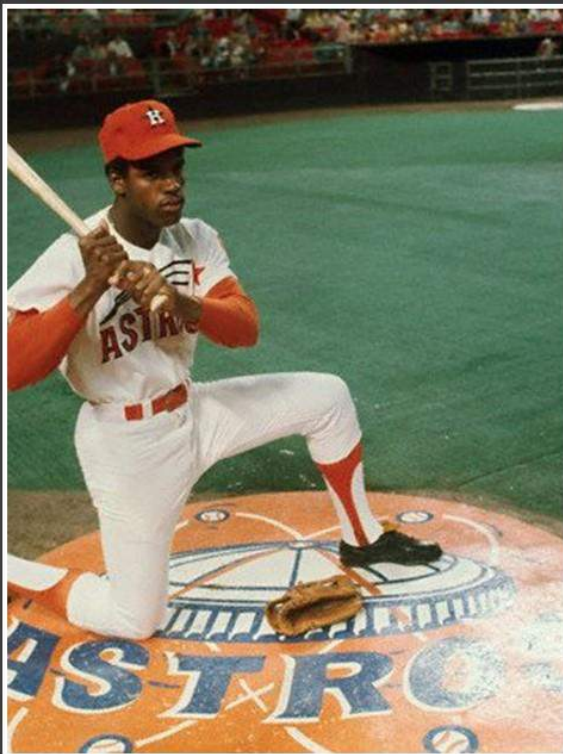
Based on “Casey at the Bat” and written in iambic pentameter, Shakespearean Baseball stars Shuster as the unnamed Stratford manager and Wayne and ‘the noblest catcher of them all,’ the Mighty Yogi, who is embroiled in a prolonged slump

“Shakespearean Baseball” was later rebroadcast in 1971, and again in 1977

stuff!” But Macduff’s “very palpable hit” is ruled foul. Yogi challenges the umpire, played by Paul Kligman, arguing “so fair a foul I have not seen” followed by “get thee a pair of glasses, get thee to an optometrist!” With “two out, damn spot,” it is Yogi’s time at bat. Unlike the Ernest Thayer poem where the Mighty Casey strikes out, the Mighty Yogi gets beamed. Yogi enters a dramatic monologue in a semiconscious state. Again he paraphrases Hamlet with “alas, poor Durocher, I knew him well, a man of infinite lip.” Then he says “’tis a tale told by an umpire, full of sound and fury, signifying 1-nothing” before slipping on a baseball, knocking himself out. The manager ends the sketch by lamenting “no longer would Stratford see Yogi play ball, I’m trading the bum to Montreal.”



It's time for Shakespearean Baseball!



In 1971, "Citizen Kane" was parodied with "Citizen Wayne"

Citizen Wayne's marble was from Carrara, his teak was from Ceylon, and the echo was from Switzerland

What about the carpet?

"Houston. That's Astroturf."



Although the 1973 Montreal Expos fell short of winning their first National League East division title, they remained the best baseball team in the British Commonwealth.

They were the only baseball team in the British Commonwealth.



**BUT
SERIOUSLY....**



The disappointing finish did not prevent the Expos from facing the Chelsea Grouse, a fictional British team, in "The First Commonwealth Pennant."

"Bowler hatted home run hitters drink tea between strikeouts and show how reserved British ball players can be under stress."

--The Sherbrooke Record



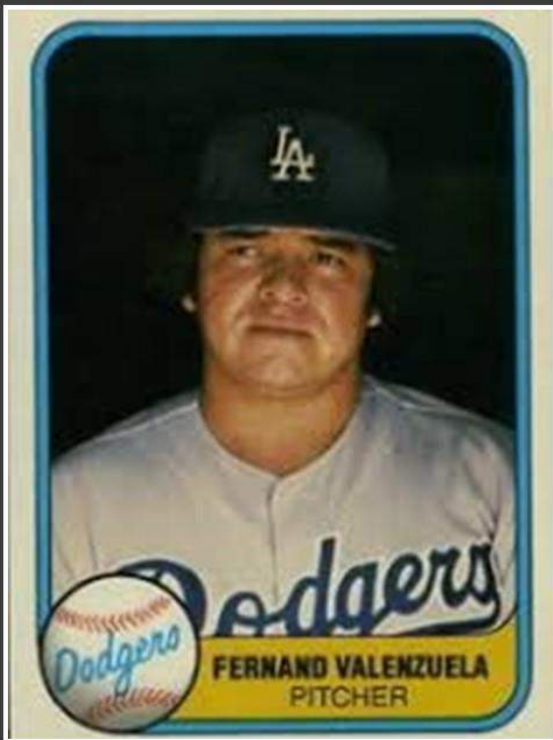
"Everybody's a Comic" (1978)

Frank Shuster: What's the score?

Tom Harvey: 2-0

Frank Shuster: Who's winning?

Tom Harvey: Two.



In 1982, "The Mask of Zorro" was parodied with "The Mark of Zero"

Shuster plays the Commandante, who is described as "the most implacable man in California," to which Wayne answers "He's Fernando Valenzuela's lawyer?"



Amid Fernandomania and after winning the Rookie of the Year, the Cy Young Award, and the World Series for the Dodgers in 1981, Valenzuela held out in spring training for more money.

Overhearing the acrimonious contract dispute which was conducted in Spanish, manager Tommy Lasorda surmised that "I think he wants Texas back."



By the 1980s, comedy was becoming edgier and more aggressive. Consequently, critics panned Wayne and Shuster's literary humour as archaic and out of touch with the times.

The monthly series of yesteryear was replaced by a few special episodes per season.



Wayne and Shuster were asked to reformat one of their specials as a movie for children.

In 1988, the CBC aired "Once Upon A Giant."

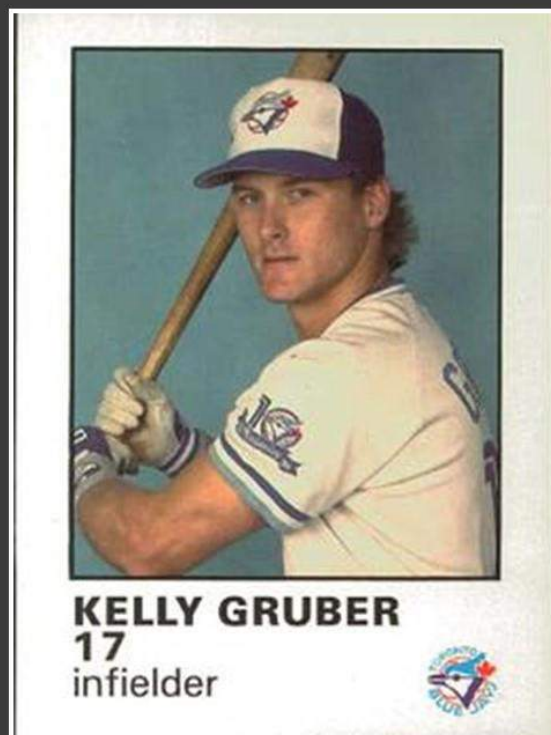
Lester the Jester (Wayne) and Humphrey the Physician (Shuster) were thrown in jail for intercepting the wedding of Princess Marigold and the evil Prince Malocchio ("the evil eye")

In jail, they meet Angelica the Good Witch, who appears magically when people are in need of help.



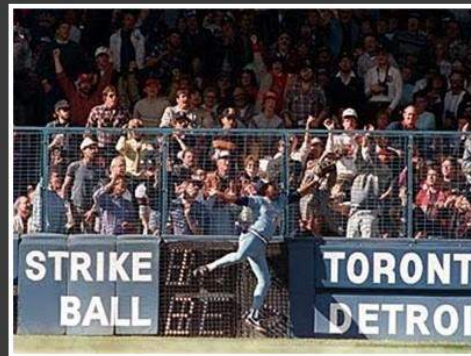
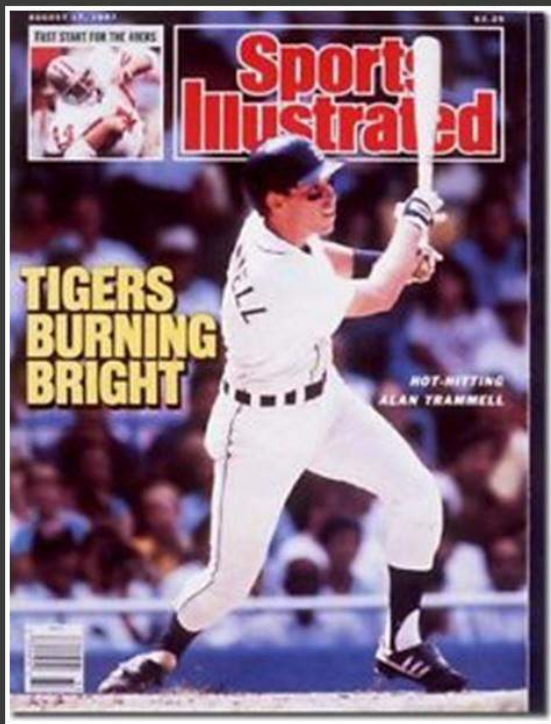
Lester whispers to Humphrey to ask "Where was she when the Blue Jays needed her?"

In 1987, the Blue Jays were embroiled in a four team pennant race with the New York Yankees, the Milwaukee Brewers, and the Detroit Tigers



Record with one week to play:

Team	W-L	GB
Toronto	96-59	----
Detroit	93-62	3



The Blue Jays proceeded to lose all of their last seven games, including four one-run decisions to the Detroit Tigers, who eventually won the American League East division title.



The Tigers won the final game 1-0 on a solo home run by Larry Herndon, October 4, 1987.

WP – Frank Tanana

LP – Jimmy Key

Included among the 51,005 spectators wearing full Blue Jays regalia was Johnny Wayne.



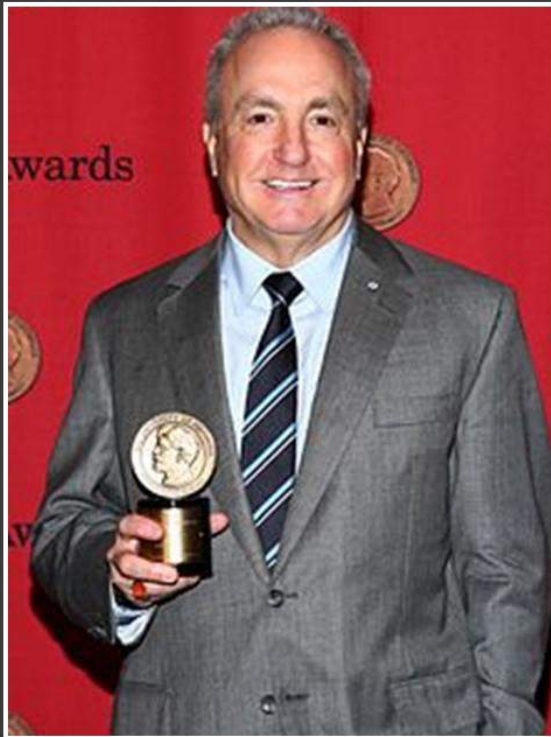
Wayne and Shuster aired their final television special in 1989.

A year later, on July 19, 1990, Johnny Wayne died of cancer, age 72.



Frank Shuster continued to work for the CBC, hosting "Wayne and Shuster in Black and White" from 1995 to 1997.

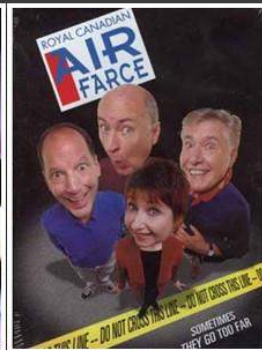
Frank Shuster died after a long illness on January 13, 2002, age 85.



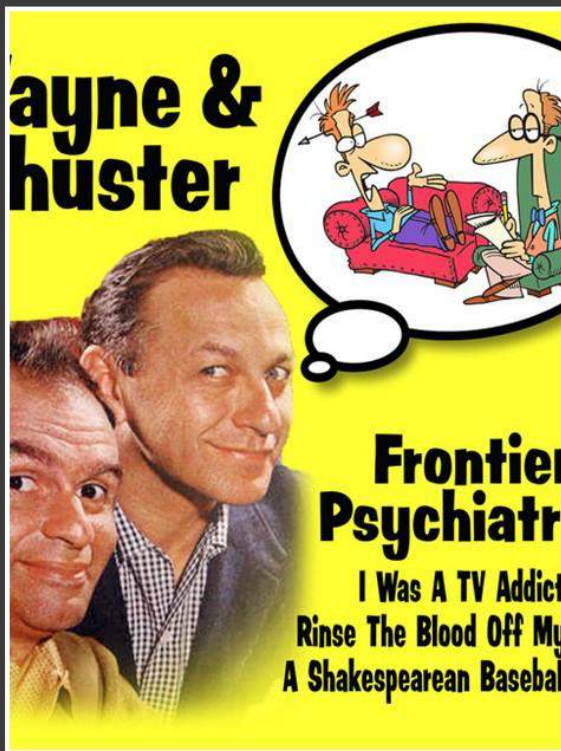
The legacy of Wayne and Shuster's comedy continues on both sides of the 49th parallel

Shuster's daughter Rosalind was once married to Lorne Lipowitz

Lipowitz, now Lorne Michaels, founded Saturday Night Live in 1975 and continues to oversee the popular comedy program



SCTV, Russell Peters, Mike Myers (Wayne's World???) and the Royal Canadian Air Farce are just four of many comedy acts whose comedy was influenced by Wayne and Shuster



Two songs by Australian artists, Dollar Bar's "Wayne and Shuster" and the Avalanches' "Frontier Psychiatrist," were both inspired by Wayne and Shuster



Johnny Wayne's sons Michael, Brian, and Jamie, as well as Rosalind Shuster, continue to promote the work of their fathers with partners including the Stratford Festival, Encore+, and the Toronto Jewish Film Festival

Sadly, Frank Shuster's son Steve died in 2017, age 66.



*Well I see by the clock on the wall, That it's time to bid you one and all.
 Goodbye (Goodbye) So long (So long) Farewell (Farewell) Adieu (Adieu)
 Good (Stay Well) Bye Bye (Keep Warm) Relax (And Eat) Take Care (Stay L
 Adieu mon vieux. A la prochaine. Goodbye 'til when we meet again!*

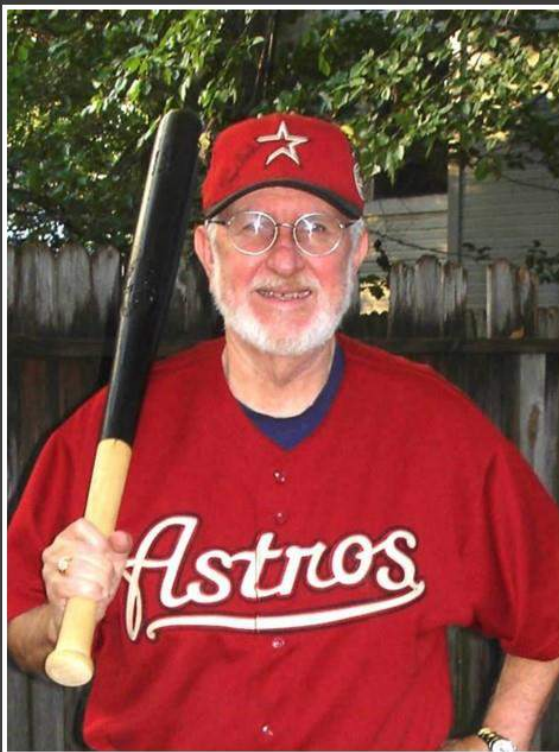


Wayne and Shuster was popular in both Germany and Italy



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Bill McCurdy
 Mark Pattison
 David Raglin
 Rosalind Shuster
 Brian Wayne
 Laurie Wayne
 Michael Wayne



IN MEMORY

William O. "Bill" McCurdy III
 December 31, 1937-April 27, 2019

Founder, The Pecan Park Eagle

Thanks for the opportunity, Bill!

Maxwell Kates
November 2019