

HUGH O'BRIAN

Bio In Brief



Hugh O'Brian, star of motion pictures, television and Broadway, has mastered his craft across the entire spectrum of "Show Business." But with all his success, he has never lost sight of the civic and philanthropic opportunities that so-called "Stardom" offers to those who are willing to use their popularity and time to motivate others for a worthy cause. He has reinvested his good fortune in many ways to help others, working tirelessly to develop projects to benefit young people around the world. Hugh is the Founder and Chairman Emeritus of Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY), founded in 1958 to seek out, recognize and develop leadership potential in high school sophomores. O'Brian says, "Over 425,000 have now gone through HOBY's leadership development programs. We get them when they are 15-16 year old sophomores. My first 15 year olds are now 70 and 71 years old! -- WOW! It is our 56th year of motivating and developing tomorrow's leaders today!" In 1955, Hugh was also one of the Founders and first President of the Thaliens, a group of young Hollywood stars who formed the organization to help children with mental health problems. In 1964, he also set up the Hugh O'Brian Acting Awards competition at UCLA, designed to bring recognition to the outstanding young actors and actresses at the University. Born in 1925 in Rochester, New York, Mr. O'Brian's introduction to diversification came early. Hugh's father was a key executive with "Armstrong World," and was transferred to many cities before taking over the Chicago office in 1930, when Hugh was five years old. Back then, anything west of the Mississippi was run out of the Chicago office. Hugh attended New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois, Roosevelt Military Academy in Aledo, Illinois and Kemper Military Academy in Booneville, Missouri. In high school, his sports activities were diversified among football, basketball, wrestling and track, winning letters in all four sports. After a semester at the University of Cincinnati with studies charted toward a law career, Mr. O'Brian, at 17, enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1943. He became the youngest Drill Instructor in Marine Corps' history, and during his four-year "hitch," won a coveted Fleet appointment to the United States Naval Academy. After passing the entrance exams, he declined the appointment, deciding instead to enroll at Yale University to study law. After serving his four years and receiving his honorable discharge from the Marine Corps in 1947, Mr. O'Brian went to Los Angeles where he planned to earn some extra money for his Yale education. He met Ruth Roman and Linda Christian, very successful actresses at the time, who introduced him to a "little theatre" group. When a leading man became ill, Mr. O'Brian agreed to substitute. Originally, he felt the experience might be helpful in his law career; however, he got such good reviews in Somerset Maugham's play "Home and Beauty," that he decided to enroll at UCLA, and continue his little theater appearances as an avocation while continuing his quest for a college education. About four months later in 1948, Ida Lupino saw one of his performances and signed him for his first starring role in the film "Never Fear" which Ms. Lupino directed. This brought him a contract with Universal Studios. During his first year under contract he enrolled at Los Angeles City College and managed to amass 17 college credits in addition to making five pictures at Universal. Mr. O'Brian left Universal after making 20 films and signed with 20th Century Fox to do three films, "There's No Business Like Show Business," "Broken Lance" and "White Feather," along with numerous television shows. The "big break" in his career came in 1955, when he was chosen to portray the legendary U.S. Marshal, Wyatt Earp, on TV. Shortly after the series debuted in September 1955 as the "first Adult Western," it quickly became one of the top rated shows on television and Mr. O'Brian a much-discussed talent.

During its seven-year run, "The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp" always placed in the top five TV shows in the nation. In 1972-73 he starred in another TV series, "Search." Mr. O'Brien also had an illustrious career in the theatre. He starred on Broadway in "Cactus Flower," "The Decision," "Destry Rides Again," "First Love," and in the first Broadway revival of "Guys and Dolls." He also starred in the national companies of "Cactus Flower," "Mister Roberts," "The Music Man," "The Odd Couple," "Plaza Suite," "The Tender Trap," and "A Thousand Clowns." In 1958, Mr. O'Brien was honored to be invited by Nobel Laureate and great humanitarian, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, to visit him at his clinic in Lambrene, Africa, where he spent nine very inspirational days. Dr. Schweitzer's strong belief that "the most important thing in education is to teach young people to think for themselves" impressed O'Brien. Two weeks after his return to the United States, he put Schweitzer's words into action by founding Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership (HOBY). Its format for motivation is simple: bring a select group of 15-16 year-old high school sophomores with leadership potential together with a group of distinguished leaders in business, education, government and the professions, and let the two interact. Using a question and answer format, these young future leaders of tomorrow, selected annually to represent over 12,000 public and private high schools, get a realistic look at what makes America's Incentive System tick, thus better enabling them to "think for themselves" and focus on their career opportunities. One-hundred percent of the students who have attended one of HOBY's three to four day Leadership Development Seminars held each spring in their state have graduated from high school. There is no cost to the student or parent at the state level. HOBY Leadership Development Seminars take place in all 50 states, as well as in Canada, China, Israel, Mexico and Taiwan. Thirty-eight states hold two to five seminars, because of the large number of high schools in that state. All public and private high schools in the United States receive HOBY's nomination materials in September each year, and all 10th-graders are eligible, and encouraged to apply. All HOBY programs are coordinated and executed by an extraordinary group of VOLUNTEERS, who are on the "firing line" in business, education, government and the professions. Service organizations such as the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), Jaycees, Kiwanis, Lions, National Management Association, Optimists, and the Red Cross are the backbone of this "Hugh" volunteer effort. Mr. O'Brien is now retired, after 50 years of donating 70 hours or more a week to HOBY. At the conclusion of the HOBY state seminars held in each state every spring, several boys and girls are selected by the volunteers at each of the local 75 HOBY Leadership Seminar sites to represent their state at HOBY's annual "Superbowl," the World Leadership Congress (WLC). This eight-day WLC is held each July in a major city (i.e. Chicago, Washington D,C, etc) and coordinated by a major University. In addition, "outstanding" 10th graders from 25-35 other countries are also selected to attend HOBY's annual WLC program. The cultural differences that exist between countries of the world are explored in friendship by these American 10th graders and their international peers. The HOBY experience is truly an inspirational event of a lifetime that fosters tolerance, respect and understanding among these future leaders, who comprise tomorrow's promise in our "World Community." HOBY is a non-profit 501c3 organization and is funded solely through the private sector. It does not seek support from any government source. HOBY is one of America's finest examples of our "private sector initiative."

HOBY's goal is not to teach these future leaders what to think, but how to think, and what the thinking process is. In essence, HOBY is a living dream, which through Mr. O'Brien's dedication and vision, along with the steadfast efforts of his army of over 4,000 volunteer supporters, has become a living, giving reality to benefit ALL mankind. Whether your gift be in time or \$\$\$, HOBY offers a great return on your investment. Mr. O'Brien lives with his beautiful wife, Virginia, in a hilltop home overlooking Beverly Hills.

