

Entertainment News: Playboy Founder Hugh Hefner Dies at 91

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on September 28, 2017 - 12:43am

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LOS ANGELES – Hugh Hefner was the man who turned the key to the sexual revolution when he founded *Playboy Magazine* in 1953. What started in an apartment in Chicago became a worldwide empire as the Playboy brand and image was embedded into American consciousness. Hefner died on Sept. 27, 2017. He was 91.

Hefner – nicknamed Hef – was a straitlaced midwestern boy who turned an obsession with his own sexual frustrations into Playboy Magazine, the first mainstream publication to feature men’s lifestyle articles, high-level literature and the famous “Playboy Interview,” between pictorials and a monthly “centerfold” of nude women (Hefner’s “girl next door” Playmates and Bunnies). He embraced both the success of the magazine and the life it gave him, enjoying (at least as an image) the same swinging style emboldened by the Playboy philosophy of the sexual and sophisticated 20th Century man. Or, in a sense, he was a mainstream pornographer who exploited the nudity for promoting all the other stuff. Hefner was called that and more throughout his cultural influence, as in his lifetime the concept of a nude picture in a magazine has become almost quaint.

Hugh Marston Hefner was born in Chicago, graduating from Steinmetz High School and the University of Illinois. He was working as a copywriter for Esquire magazine, but left in 1952 when he was not satisfied with the direction that publication was heading. He raised \$8600 – including a \$1000 from his mother – and started Playboy Magazine out of his Chicago apartment in 1953. The first issue featured an old calendar nude of actress Marilyn Monroe, and Hefner never looked back. Playboy Enterprises became a global phenomenon, spinning off into product lines, nightclubs and other media. Hefner’s daughter Christie became CEO of the business in 1988.

In recent years, Playboy Magazine has suffered the fate of other print media, and had severe circulation losses after the advent of the internet. Citing these changing patterns, the magazine even dropped nudity for a year in 2016, with Hefner’s blessing. That ended with the this year’s February issue.

Hefner in the meantime, despite having a mild stroke when he was 59 years old, always remained the face of Playboy, and always perpetuated the “life” even into his elder years. He opened two “Playboy Mansions” in his tenure, one in Chicago (closed 1974) and one in Los Angeles (sold last year). He was married three times, with two of the marriages resulting directly from Playboy interactions. He was nonchalant about his “conquests,” but maintained a number of steady relationships over the years, including notable mates Barbi Benton and Kendra Wilkinson. He is survived by his current wife Crystal Harris, and four children, including Christie Hefner. He passed away of natural causes at his home in Los Angeles.

For all of his “image,” Hugh Hefner was actually a philosophical man who was also a tremendous film buff. He once said, “I would like to think that I will be remembered as someone who had some positive impact on the socio-sexual values of his time. And I think I’m secure and happy in that.”

Sources for this article came from Wikipedia and CNBC.com. Hugh Hefner, 1926-2017



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