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## **HARRY FRIEDMAN**

*Executive Producer*

Harry Friedman has become the most decorated producer of game shows in history over the course of producing more than 6,270 hours of game shows for American television audiences. The majority of that tally comes from producing more than 9,500 episodes of the two most lasting and successful syndicated programs of all time: **Wheel of Fortune** and **JEOPARDY!**. Under his stewardship, the two programs have transcended the game show category and are among the most buzzworthy programs of any type on television today.

Friedman is a multiple Emmy® Award winner who is the only producer to ever have won two Emmys in the same category in a tie with himself, a Peabody Award winner, and an inductee into the *Broadcasting & Cable* Hall of Fame. He also has received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and has been inducted into the NAB Broadcasting Hall of Fame. He will soon be honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, recently selected as part of the Class of 2020.

Leading **Wheel of Fortune** and **JEOPARDY!** to win the industry's highest honors has earned Friedman three Guinness World Records® titles: he holds the record titles for most Emmy® Award nominations for a game show producer with 48 and most Emmy® Award wins by a game show producer with 14. He was also recognized by Guinness World Records® for having produced more game show episodes than any other individual: 12,540 episodes and counting.

Friedman's success is marked by his unique ability to maintain the tradition of the two long-running shows, while tweaking each just enough to keep them current and on the cutting edge. In September 2006, both shows made television history when they became the first syndicated programs to broadcast in High Definition. Friedman has also championed the development of **Wheel of Fortune** and **JEOPARDY!** extensions for mobile devices, along with versions for Amazon Echo, Facebook, Nintendo's Wii and Sony PlayStation.

A member of the Writers Guild of America-West and the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, Friedman lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Judy. Together, they are champions of philanthropy. The pair supports the Fond du Lac Area Foundation, Harry & Judy Friedman Family Foundation, Mark Corwin Memorial Film & Television Scholarship Fund, Marlene F. Landy Cancer Foundation, National Search Dog Foundation, and Omaha Children's Hospital.

To learn more about Harry, please visit <https://www.wheeloffortune.com/about-the-show/#harry-friedman>

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### **OVERVIEW**

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## **EARLY LIFE & CAREER**

Long before the concept of student internships was created, Omaha native Harry Friedman began hanging around the city's television stations, learning by watching and doing whatever management permitted.

In 1971, Friedman arrived in Los Angeles and, without contacts, gave himself six months to find a job. With less than 24 hours remaining on his self-imposed deadline, he landed a part-time question-writer spot on "The Hollywood Squares," marking the beginning of his long, valued relationship with Heatter-Quigley Productions. Over the following 11 years, Friedman wrote and produced thousands of episodes of the popular series and was also actively involved in the development of several other game shows. He first joined **Wheel of Fortune** as producer in 1995, adding producer duties for **JEOPARDY!** in 1997. In 1999, he was elevated to executive producer for both series.

Friedman's other writing and producing credits range from network primetime specials, such as "American Yearbook" for CBS, to documentaries and home video. He also has worked with such companies as FOX, Dick Clark Productions, Stephen J. Cannell Productions, Buena Vista Television/ABC, Orion Television, The Playboy Channel, Laurel Entertainment, Vin Di Bona Productions, A&E Network, Krofft Productions, Rosner Television and Four Star Productions.

## **WHEEL OF FORTUNE**

At **Wheel of Fortune**, some elements Friedman has implemented through the years include: the "Triple Toss Up," "Express Wedge," "1/2 Car Tag," "Free Play," "Toss Up" puzzles, brand integration opportunities, the "Mystery Round," "Jackpot Round" the "Wild Card" and the "Million Dollar Wedge." He also oversaw the introduction of a new, highly sophisticated set, which incorporates state-of-the-art lighting, as well as a modernized puzzleboard with LCD screens giving Vanna White the ability to make letters appear with only a touch of her hand.

Friedman doesn't forget the viewers at home. In the show's 36<sup>th</sup> season, for the first time ever, the show gave away a home to a viewer as part of the "Home Sweet Home Giveaway." He also implemented the "Secret Santa Holiday Giveaway," during which viewers have the chance to win everything a contestant wins in a game. To date, more than \$2.5 million in cash and prizes has been given away as part of the promotion.

He has extended the reach of **Wheel of Fortune** on social media. Twitter followers can participate in a daily "Twitter Toss Up," where the **Wheel of Fortune** Twitter account posts partially solved puzzles and followers compete to see who will solve them first. Facebook fans can participate in various Facebook Live events including voting on Vanna's dresses, competing against one another to guess toss up puzzles or even test their skills against former contestants. Instagram is where they can find the best selection of behind-the-scenes photos and candid moments from the set.

WheelofFortune.com is accessible via mobile and allows viewers to play the "Toss Up Challenge" and **Wheel of Fortune** Bingo, enter to win luxury vacations or prizes from show partners, learn more about Vanna White, and join the Wheel Watchers Club.

The Wheel Watchers Club, the first-ever, long-term, online viewer engagement program in television history, and its extension, the SPIN ID, were both developed by Friedman. To date,

more than 13 million people have signed up and more than \$11 million in cash and prizes have been won by members just by watching the show.

Additionally, Friedman conceptualized the *Wheelmobile*, **Wheel of Fortune's** promotional vehicle that conducts contestant search events across the country providing fans the chance to audition for the show.

## **JEOPARDY!**

Under Friedman's direction, **JEOPARDY!**, America's Favorite Quiz Show®, has become the most honored syndicated game show in television history. **JEOPARDY!** has won a total of 35 Emmy Awards; in 2019, N.A.T.A.S. honored Alex Trebek with the Emmy for Outstanding Game Show Host. In 2011, Friedman guided **JEOPARDY!** to win its first-ever Peabody Award. The awards panel credited the show for its role in "encouraging, celebrating and rewarding knowledge."

Friedman has continued to broaden the show's scope with an expanded list of challenging categories and clues that reflect popular culture and a variety of special tournaments. For **JEOPARDY!**'s 35<sup>th</sup> season (2018-2019), Friedman created the **JEOPARDY!** All-Star Games, a brand-new tournament in which fans had the chance to see their favorite players join forces and play **JEOPARDY!** as it had never been played before: in teams. The All-Star Games also included **JEOPARDY!**'s first-ever live draft, which streamed in real time on Facebook Live.

In 2003, Friedman lifted **JEOPARDY!**'s five-day limit rule for contestants, allowing returning champions to continue amassing winnings as long as they remain victorious. This rule change led the way for the memorable 74-consecutive-day run of Utah software engineer Ken Jennings, during which he won a record \$2.5 million. Series viewership increased an impressive 30 percent during the streak, at times outperforming primetime programs while making it one of the most talked-about shows in the country. In 2019, Las Vegas sports bettor James Holzhauer's record-breaking streak also created a viral sensation and became a ratings juggernaut.

In 2011, Friedman oversaw "JEOPARDY! The IBM Challenge," a historic exhibition match that pitted two of the show's most successful and celebrated contestants – Jennings and Brad Rutter – against an IBM computer named Watson. Thanks to this unique partnership, **JEOPARDY!** served as a vital testing ground for the next generation of artificial intelligence. The three-day exhibition scored the series' highest ratings in five years, surging 30 percent from the previous year, making Watson a pop culture icon and a part of the American lexicon. The advanced technology that IBM developed to create Watson is now used at many leading cancer research institutes.

Friedman's ideas are not limited to what can be accomplished in the confines of the studio. He was instrumental in the creation of the Clue Crew, a team of roving correspondents who travel the world delivering visual clues for the millions of viewers back home. Additionally, Friedman plays a very active role in **JEOPARDY!**'s digital and social initiatives. Friedman was also the driving force behind streaming network Crackle's weekly quiz show "Sports Jeopardy!," which launched in 2014 and for which he served as executive producer.

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