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The Inimitable Don Knotts, Dead at 81

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The death of a man who brought so many, including my own family, so much wholesome laughter should not pass without notice here. Don Knotts was most famous for playing “Barney Fife,” the awkward and nervous deputy to TV’s Sheriff Andy Griffith. *The Andy Griffith Show* is an important piece of American culture, an iconic monument to television — and to humor that was never coarse and never mean.

Some have observed that those who are most humorous on stage or screen are often unhappy in life. It is hard to imagine Don Knotts in that way, for his humor seemed to spring from something genuine and joyous. I am among those who know very little about his private life and virutally nothing about his private thoughts, but I want to pay public tribute to a man who made me, and so many millions of others, laugh.

Until reading his obituary I had no idea that from 1953 to 1955 he had played on the soap opera, *Search for Tomorrow*.

NIP THESE LINKS IN THE BUD: [*The Washington Post*](#), [a second WP story](#), [*USA Today*](#), [*The Boston Herald*](#), [*BBC News*](#), [*The Los Angeles Times*](#), [*The New York Times*](#).

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