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John Wayne *Top 100 Americans*

Marion Mitchell Morrison (born Marion Robert Morrison; May 26, 1907 – June 11, 1979), better known by his stage name John Wayne, was an American film actor, director and producer.[An Academy Award-winner, Wayne was among the top box office draws for three decades. An enduring American icon, he epitomized rugged masculinity and is famous for his demeanor, including his distinctive calm voice, walk, and height.

Wayne was born in Winterset, Iowa, but his family relocated to the greater Los Angeles area when he was nine years old. He graduated from Glendale High School (Glendale, California). He found work at local film studios when he lost his football scholarship to USC as a result of a bodysurfing accident. Initially working for the Fox Film Corporation, he mostly appeared in small bit parts. His first leading role came in the widescreen epic *The Big Trail* (1930), which led to leading roles in numerous films throughout the 1930s, many of them in the western genre. His career rose to further heights in 1939, with John Ford's *Stagecoach* making him an instant superstar. Wayne would go on to star in 142 pictures. Biographer Ronald Davis says:

John Wayne personified for millions the nation's frontier heritage. Eighty-three of his movies were Westerns, and in them he played cowboys, cavalrymen, and unconquerable loners extracted from the Republic's central creation myth."

Among his better-known later films are *The Quiet Man* (1952), in which he is an Irish-American in love with a fiery spinster played by Maureen O'Hara; *The Searchers* (1956), in which he plays a Civil War veteran whose young niece (Natalie Wood) is abducted by a tribe of Comanches in an Indian raid; *Rio Bravo* (1959), playing a sheriff with Dean Martin; *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), portraying a troubled rancher competing with Eastern lawyer (James Stewart) for a woman's hand in marriage; *True Grit* (1969), as a humorous U.S. Marshal who sets out to avenge a man's death in the role that won Wayne his Academy Award; and *The Shootist* (1976), his final screen performance, in which he plays an aging gunfighter battling cancer. Wayne was a prominent Republican in Hollywood, supporting anti-communist positions. In June 1999, the American Film Institute named Wayne 13th among the Greatest Male Screen Legends of All Time.