

# LEO ROBIN MUSIC

December 1, 2020

Mrs. Vanessa Williams  
c/o Toni Howard  
International Creative Management  
10250 Constellation Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90067

Dear Mrs. Williams,

**Leo Robin Music's Open Letter to Vanessa Williams Re: Moral Wrong for Failure to Install "#Leosloststar" Awarded to the "Thanks For The Memory" Oscar-Winning Lyricist More Than 30 Years Ago** *(Released Tuesday, December 1, 2020 6:38 AM PST)*

I, as Leo Robin's grandson, am compelled by your announcement a year ago and the events that have taken place over the course of 30 years to request that you redress the moral wrong committed against lyricist Leo Robin by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce and the Walk of Fame Committees (2018 - 2020). Leo Robin Music was outraged by your announcement to once again deny the installation of the star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame that was awarded to Leo Robin more than 30 years ago. The Hollywood Chamber as well as the Walk of Fame Committee continue to be morally adrift in regard to this unprecedented situation with the star awarded to Robin but not installed. And they must recognize that they bear responsibility for this on-going moral injustice and take the steps to address it.

In a live stream exclusively by *Variety* on [www.walkoffame.com](http://www.walkoffame.com) from the Hollywood Chamber on June 20, 2019, you, a member of the 2019-20 Walk of Fame's Selection Committee, announced the new honorees from the Hollywood Walk of Fame Class of 2020. Leo Robin was not on this list. In your beautiful speaking voice, just like your singing, bided everyone "a good afternoon" and announced the honorees in your classy style. The Hollywood Chamber recently announced on June 18, 2020 the honorees of the Hollywood Walk of Fame Class of 2021. Again, Leo Robin was not on this list. Leaving Leo Robin, over and over again, off the list of honorees to have their stars installed and unveiled on the world's most famous walkway is despicable.

In an interview reported by TooFab Staff on 11/1/2019, you revealed your idols, "There's so many examples of those kind of influences that, you know, Diahann Carroll just passed, she played my mother in a TV movie that I produced for Lifetime. Lena Horne, who is one of my idols, I got a chance to win the Lena Horne Award and she acknowledged me and gave me special thanks." Sophie Dweck from *Us Weekly* also reported about 25 things you might not know about you including number 16: "My favorite fan moment was in 1984, when I met the legendary Lena Horne -- she was everything I aspired to be."

The outstanding contributions Leo Robin has made to The Great American Songbook are celebrated time and again by legendary and contemporary covers alike by artists who are Walk

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of Famers including your idols. *Lena Horne*, who was honored with her star in 1960 in the categories of recording and motion pictures, recorded many songs written by Leo Robin including "Havin' Myself a Time," "In Love in Vain" and "Prisoner of Love." Diahann Carroll, who was honored with her star in 1990 in the category of recording, recorded "In Love in Vain" and "What's Good about Goodbye?" Of course, you received your star in 2007 in recording. You and your idols are, indeed, three of the most talented, beautiful and classiest stars, and no doubt, tenacious too, on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

While Leo Robin music congratulates the Hollywood Walk of Fame Class of 2021 for the honors, we are woefully reminded of the fact that the star awarded to Leo Robin in 1990 was never installed. When I called the Hollywood Chamber and spoke to Ana Martinez, Producer of the Walk Of Fame, more than three years ago on July 6, 2017, I told her about my discovery of Leo's long-lost star. She confirmed it was true and said, "Nothing like this has ever happened before." After I spoke with Ms. Martinez, I followed her instructions and wrote a letter addressed to the Walk of Fame Committee, of which you have been a member for, at least, the past two years. In the letter I sent to the Walk of Fame Committee on July 11, 2017, a fresh carbon copy is enclosed, I wrote, "In light of these bizarre circumstances, I...humbly request that the Walk of Fame Committee reinstate the award to Leo of the posthumous star."

Ashley Lee from the Los Angeles Times first broke on May 23, 2019 this intriguing story, *Leo Robin never got his Walk of Fame star. Now his grandson is fighting for it*, about my serendipitous discovery of Leo's long-lost star which I believe got lost because "[The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce]...made this 30-year-old mistake," Ms. Lee quoting me. Leo Robin's wife, Cherie Robin, and actor, Bob Hope, sponsored Leo for a star in 1988 but, sadly, Mrs. Robin passed away slightly more than one year before the letter was sent out from the Hollywood Chamber announcing that her husband had been awarded the star and so, unfortunately, it was never installed.

In the wake of the release of this story last year by The Times, Leo Robin Music was outraged to learn what happened 30 years ago. Ms. Lee reported, "The envelope was returned to its sender and has since remained in the Chamber of Commerce's records." She also tweeted, "at first I didn't believe that Leo Robin's star had really slipped through the cracks" with a photo of that acceptance letter and the envelope stamped "RETURN TO SENDER." Ms. Lee explained the Chamber's view, "A mistake it was not, noted (Ana) Martinez to The Times. Back in 1989, before the ease of email and cell phones, honorees were not as repeatedly and actively pursued to secure their star as they are today. That means no follow-up letters and no calls to co-signers, even if Robin's application was co-signed by (Bob) Hope, who has four stars on the Walk."

In the Sunday print edition of The Times issued on May 26, 2019, midway in the article "A Walk of Fame star still in limbo," Ms. Ashley Lee posed this question to the Chamber, "It's been decades since Robin was named to the Walk of Fame...what would it take to get the star installed? Martinez explained that Robin would need to be reinstated by the current committee

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at the next annual meeting. She didn't anticipate problems with that part of the process." This was all, apparently, an insincere PR stunt being that I never heard a word from the Hollywood Chamber since the meeting took place in June 2019.

Leo Robin wrote the lyrics to the torchy ballad "In Love in Vain," composed by Jerome Kern, which was introduced by Louanne Hogan dubbing for the star Jeanne Crain in the 1946 musical film *Centennial Summer* directed by Otto Preminger. It was produced in response to the hugely successful 1944 MGM musical film *Meet Me in St. Louis*, which starred Judy Garland. In the *Best Years: Going to the Movies, 1945-1946*, Charles Affron and Mirella Jona Affron give their critique of the scene with this song, "*Centennial Summer* did not, however, boast a Deanna Durbin or a Judy Garland, leading ladies of spectacular musical talent. Moviegoers had to make do with Jeanne Crain lip-synching Kern's [and Robin's] wonderful ballad "In Love in Vain.""

This song whose heartfelt lyrics about the aspirations of love have been performed through the ages by a wide spectrum of entertainers from the most celebrated jazz musicians such as pianists Bill Evans and Nina Simone and vocalists such as Bobby Darin, Carmen McRae, Sarah Vaughan, Lena Horne, Margaret Whiting, Eydie Gorme, Dick Haymes and Helen Forrest to actresses such as Diahann Carroll, Doris Day and Jane Powell.

Meanwhile, the Hollywood Chamber along with the Walk of Fame Committee have mislaid their moral compass. What happened after I spoke to the Hollywood Chamber over the past three years - where it obstructed installation by ignoring emails from me for a whole year and failing to honor its promise for the Walk of Fame Committee to consider my request for the star to be placed on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and toying with me - is just plain wrong. What happened more than 30 years ago - when the acceptance letter was returned to sender and there was no follow-up letters and no calls to notify co-sponsor Bob Hope - is wrong as wrong can be. The 1990 Walk of Fame Committee awarded a star to a deserved honoree and then the Hollywood Chamber and subsequent Walk of Fame Committees would take it back. These actions over the years that resulted in the failure to install the star awarded to Robin are manifest of a moral wrong.

Mrs. Williams, I urge you, as a member of the Walk of Fame Committee and the spokesperson for the year 2020, to find the moral compass that guides the Hollywood Chamber and the Walk of Fame Committee and set a new course. Right now, in contradiction to its mission, the Hollywood Chamber is not doing justice to the award to Leo Robin. Instead we are witness to the moral injustice of Leo's long-lost star and the Hollywood Chamber's refusal to honor their commitment to Robin's memory. I want to reaffirm my deepest level of commitment to achieving that all of you - the Hollywood Chamber and the Walk of Fame Committee - uphold the strictest moral authority in fulfilling your commitment. This is your moral imperative.

The Hollywood Chamber and the Walk of Fame Committee have exercised wanton disregard of its own rules for the star awarded to Leo Robin but never installed. Throughout the past sixty years, the Hollywood Chamber has successfully kept track of 2,691 honorees and has seen to it

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that each and every one of them received a star and had it successfully installed on the Hollywood Walk of Fame with their name on it -- except for Leo Robin. At this point, one can't help but conclude that Robin, his sponsors, his family and the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee, itself, have been treated unjustly by the Hollywood Chamber and the Walk Of Fame Committee.

The failure of the Hollywood Chamber to install the star awarded to Leo Robin is hard to fathom but remember that my grandmother who was the sponsor passed away before receiving notification and that the co-sponsor, actor Bob Hope, was never notified. It is high time for the Hollywood Chamber to preserve their integrity and honor the decision of the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee and its obligation to put Leo's long-lost star in its rightful place on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Mrs. Williams, you have lead a lifetime of stepping up and you have "The Right Stuff," borrowing this from the name of your 1988 platinum debut album, to make this happen. It is my hope that you, as a member of the Walk of Fame Committee and the spokesperson for the year 2020, will take the necessary steps to correct this moral wrong and install and unveil the star of my grandfather, the legendary songwriter, Leo Robin, on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about this. You can reach me by phone at (818) 618-2572 or email me at sdo007@aol.com.

In Leo Robin's lyrics from *Gulliver's Travels* -1939,

"Faithful Forever,"

Enclosure

cc: copy sent FedEx overnight to Mr. Brad Cafarelli (Publicist)

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