

September 15, 2020

Janet W. Lee
Variety
11175 Santa Monica Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Dear Ms. Janet Lee,

Leo Robin Music's Open Letter to Janet W. Lee at Variety: Demystify This! What Happened to the Star Awarded to the "Thanks For The Memory" Lyricist More Than 30 Years Ago but never installed? *(Released Wednesday, September 9, 2020 6:35 AM PST)*

I, as Leo Robin's grandson, am compelled by your recent article in Variety, the premier source of entertainment news, issued on Tuesday, September 3, 2020 titled "Demystifying Hollywood's Walk of Fame: 'You Cannot Just Buy a Star'" to ask you to lend your special unearthing powers and skills to demystify what happened to the star awarded to lyricist Leo Robin on the Hollywood Walk of Fame more than 30 years ago but never installed. I found your article extremely insightful in view of the controversy between Leo Robin Music and the Hollywood Chamber especially what the Producer of the Walk Of Fame, Ana Martinez, told Variety, "You cannot just buy a star. People don't understand that there's a process. They feel like if they have money, it can be bought, and that's not the way it works."

One would like to believe that the "process" that Ms. Martinez raves about reflects ideals where the Hollywood Chamber conducts its affairs as a professionally run organization and the Hollywood Walk Of Fame Committee is a deliberative body that makes decisions in a highly ethical ecosystem. Apparently, the Hollywood Chamber conducts its affairs in a different way based on the unprecedented situation with regard to the star awarded to Leo Robin more than 30 years ago but never installed because of a mistake made by them. It is mysterious that the star awarded to Leo Robin more than 30 years ago went through the "process" but was still never installed. This mystery reminds me of the title of my grandfather's song "Whispers in the Dark."

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 on July 6, 2017 of Leo's long-lost star which I believe got lost because "[The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce]...made this 30-year-old mistake," Ms. Ashley Lee quoting me.

In 1988, both Leo Robin's wife, Cherie Robin, and actor, Bob Hope, sponsored Leo for a posthumous star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. They wanted to see to it that Leo would be acknowledged for the legacy that Roy Trakin, who is the *crème de la crème* of entertainment journalism, reported on September 30, 2019, in his crisp and inimitable style, in *his* Variety article, "Thanks for the Memory: How Leo Robin Helped Usher In the Golden Age of Song in Film." They followed the instructions and mailed in the application approximately five

years after Robin's passing so that he would be eligible to be nominated for a star as soon as possible. But all too soon after that, Cherie, herself, already grief-stricken, was diagnosed with a terminal illness.

Tragically, Cherie Robin never received the good news about Leo Robin's star because she passed away on May 28, 1989, a little over one year before the letter from the Hollywood Chamber was sent out on June 18, 1990 announcing that her husband had been awarded the star. As a result of these ill-fated circumstances, Leo's star was never installed. "I do think it was meant to be," Ms. Ashley Lee reported what I said of discovering the star. "It's important to me because it was important to my grandmother to pay tribute to Leo's career in this way. And she took the time, she followed all the rules. My grandmother did everything right except live long enough."

Ms. Janet Lee, demystify this! Demystify what happened to the star awarded to Robin more than 30 years ago. Here's what we learned about what the Hollywood Chamber did in the wake of the release of this story last year by The Times. Ms. Ashley 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. Ashley 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."

The 1937 film *Artists and Models* received an Oscar nomination for Best Song, *Whispers in the Dark*, composed by Frederick Hollander with lyrics by Leo Robin, sung by Connee Boswell with *Andre Kostelanetz and His Orchestra*. The song's title captures the mystery of the star awarded to lyricist Leo Robin more than 30 years ago but never installed. The film was a musical comedy, starring Jack Benny, who adopted Leo Robin's "Love in Bloom" as his theme song and was known for playing it off-key on his violin, and it was produced by Lewis E. Gensler, who composed the song jazz standard "Love Is Just around the Corner," which Robin wrote the lyrics. The original Benny Goodman Trio with Gene Krupa on the drums and Teddy Wilson on the piano, which would become Benny Goodman's famous orchestra, broadcast on October 13 1937 "Whispers in the Dark" from the historic Madhattan Room inside the Hotel Pennsylvania, NYC. It was recorded by many of the orchestras and bands in its heyday including Josephine Bradley and Her Ballroom Orchestra, Paul Weston & His Orchestra, actress Alice Faye with Hal Kemp & His Orchestra, Bob Crosby & his Orchestra with vocal by Kay Weber and actors Bing Crosby and Kenny Baker.

Demystify this! Demystify why the Hollywood Chamber failed to notify the co-sponsor, Bob Hope, after the letter was returned to sender. It has always been true when a letter has been "Return to Sender," the sender will verify the address and resend it. In 1990, the Hollywood Chamber obstructed installation of the star when it placed the acceptance letter that was

returned to sender in its files and made no attempt to resend it. The Hollywood Chamber made no attempt to notify the sponsor, Bob Hope, who was one of the most famous entertainers in the world at the time. The Hollywood Chamber must have had Bob Hope's number from their own dealings with him. What the Chamber did after the letter was "Return to Sender" was not customary practice but smacks of disregard for the individuals honored by the Walk of Fame Committee.

There are typically only 24 stars awarded each year. It shouldn't have been that hard. Everyone else that year was given proper notice, had ceremonies and received stars. Someone somewhere should have done something. Anyone taking the time to apply as a sponsor for a candidate to receive a star has to believe that the Hollywood Chamber would be able to process the chosen few applications correctly. And, even more so, that any candidate approved for a star, would get a star.

Ms. Janet Lee, demystify this! Demystify why the Hollywood Chamber waited a whole year before responding to my letter whereby I requested the star to be reinstated. On July 11, 2017, I emailed Ms. Martinez, as she'd requested, a letter addressed to the Walk of Fame Committee, explaining what had happened and requesting that Leo Robin's 1990 posthumous star be placed on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, along with the official documents from Hillside Memorial Park to verify the date of my grandmother's demise, proving she was no longer living when the notification letter was mailed to her.

Over the next year, I never heard a word from Ms. Martinez despite initiating contact with her, repeatedly, via emails and phone calls but to no avail. Finally, on July 10, 2018, I emailed her again and that same day, almost exactly one year since I had last heard from her, I received an email from her. What a strange twist in irony; the Chamber, which administers this famous sidewalk landmark and usually assists honorees, performed the opposite of its mission and public expectations. Instead of assisting, the Chamber obstructed installation by ignoring emails 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.

Demystify this! Demystify why the star awarded to Leo Robin was never reinstated. Here 's what we know. 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 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.

Finally, Ms. Janet Lee, demystify this! Demystify why throughout the past sixty years, the Hollywood Chamber has successfully kept track of 2,691 honorees and has seen to it that each and every one of them received a star, which was then successfully installed on the Hollywood Walk of Fame - except for Leo Robin. Right now, in contradiction to its mission, the Hollywood

Chamber is not doing justice to the award to 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. One would think that today's Hollywood Walk of Fame would honor the decisions made by those who served before them. 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.

Bob Hope, who has four stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and sponsored Leo Robin for a star, and Grant, who has two stars himself and was Chairman of the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee and signed the acceptance letter addressed to Mrs. Robin, must be looking down mystified by the conduct of the Hollywood Chamber who has spurned the decision by the 1990 Walk of Fame Committee to award a star to Leo Robin. Grant was proud of his mission in life of bringing the Hollywood story to everyone and in 1987, the town's centennial year, he told Times columnist Jack Smith about Hollywood, "It's a magic word all over the world." Now is the time for the Hollywood Chamber to preserve the Hollywood magic and put Leo's long-lost star in its rightful place on the Hollywood Walk of Fame!

I would welcome you and your colleagues demystifying what happened to the star awarded to Leo Robin more than 30 years ago but never installed and the events that have taken place ever since. If I can assist you in any way in solving this mystery, you can reach me by phone at (818) 618-2572 or email at sdo007@aol.com.

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

"Faithful Forever," Leo Robin Music

Leo Robin Music