Mel Blanc, voice of cartoons, reminisces

By Robert St. James

Have you ever wondered how Porky Pig received his voice? Mel Blanc, originator of the voice of Porky, recently related this story at a lecture sponsored by SLC. Speaking to a crowd of over 1,000 people, Blanc said, "I wanted to be a real authentic voice actor, so I went to a pig farm and lived among the pigs for several weeks. Then I went back to the studio and threw myself into the role."

Blanc's wife, Melba Lawhorn, also helped in the process. "I insisted on giving Porky a voice that was as different as possible from mine," Blanc said. "I wanted to make sure that the voice was unique and authentic." Blanc's dedication to the role paid off, as his voice became instantly recognizable to audiences worldwide.

Blanc's work with Warner Bros. started in 1938, when he was asked to voice Bugs Bunny. "I remember being nervous," Blanc said. "But once I got into the voice, I couldn't stop. Bugs Bunny became my favorite character." Blanc's work on the show led to him being hired as the voice of Bosko, Bugs, Porky, and even President Roosevelt in the show "The Life of an American President." Blanc's voice work extended beyond the studio, as he also lent his voice to commercials and radio shows.

During World War II, Blanc worked for the United Service Organizations (USO), bringing entertainment to soldiers overseas. He also lent his voice to the War Department's "Rosie the Riveter" campaign.

Blanc retired from voice work in 1983, but his legacy lives on through the voices he created, including Porky Pig, Bugs Bunny, and Bosko. "I've been blessed to have worked with such wonderful characters," Blanc said. "Each one was a challenge, but also a joy to bring to life."