



“I am pleased that the Cartoonists Across America tour has been formed, because I agree that literacy has become a problem in our country. Humor itself is always a valuable tool in providing incentive for reading.”

Charles Schulz, creator of *Peanuts*

A Brief Background of Phil Yeh & Cartoonists Across America



Klaus Leven, Phil Yeh, Edward James Olmos, Steve Allen, Dr. Kort

Phil Yeh founded Cartoonists Across America in 1985 after his friend **Wally “Famous” Amos** explained the problem of illiteracy in America to him. Phil pledged to tour the world for 15 years (1986-2000) in order to try and really reach a generation of young people. On September 12, 1999, Wally presented Phil an Alphie Award on behalf of the Los Angeles County Library Foundation at Sony Pictures Studios. Along with actor **Edward James Olmos** and Imperial Toy Company CEO **Dr. Fred Kort**, Phil was recognized for his years of dedication in promoting literacy. When accepting the award, Phil announced that he would continue to tour the globe.

As we've traveled throughout the world these last 38 years promoting reading, creativity and the arts, it has become clear to us that we have to do more to make education really mean something to students. Our books, speaking engagements, mural events, and our art workshops have proven that they reach people of all ages and attract important media attention to these issues. Phil has spoken to hundreds of thousands of students from the elementary school level to teachers in universities. He has also been a featured speaker at educational, library, and book conferences around the world. His graphic novel workshops have been successful with all ages and the number of professional artists who have been influenced from Phil's ideas and support for the last 45 years is amazing. Phil has been featured on hundreds of front pages in newspapers across the country and around the world.

We try and combine our events with interviews with the local media on the subjects of creativity and literacy and how art and reading can change anyone's life. Our books and these events inspire people of all ages to turn off the TV and give reading and the creative arts a place in their lives.

Phil has inspired artists and writers all over the world. Our "Read. Avoid Extinction." dinosaurs were featured on t-shirts for many years through the American Library Association and other groups worldwide.

Cartoonists Across America has crossed North America more than 200 times, painting more than 1800 colorful literacy murals in 49 states, 3 Canadian provinces, and 15 countries (not to mention a huge mural in Budapest, Hungary in August 1990 that resulted in a dinosaur postage stamp celebrating the **United Nations Year of Literacy**). We have had many guest artists paint with us from *Teenage Ninja Turtles* creator **Kevin Eastman** to actor **Alan Alda**. Former **First Lady Barbara Bush** painted a mural with us in the Library of Congress and later Mrs. Bush honored Phil in the White House for his work.



Phil has appeared all over the United States as well as in China, Italy, Taiwan, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Mexico, Germany, The Netherlands, France, The Cayman Islands, Singapore, and Israel, and Denmark.

Cartoons and humor have a way of transcending cultural boundaries and really reaching more people. Promoting literacy and the arts can only improve the lives of everyone in our communities.



Cartoonists Morrie Turner, Sergio Aragones, Charles Schulz, Phil Yeh

Phil Yeh Bio

Phil Yeh was born on October 7, 1954 in Chicago. He started drawing and writing his own comic books in elementary school and formed his own publishing company in 1970, after attending the first San Diego Comic-Con.

In 1973, Yeh and partner Mark Eliot started their own alternative newspaper called *Uncle Jam* which featured a first issue cover by Roberta Gregory, a fellow student at Cal State University Long Beach. The paper featured interviews, full color covers, and articles on many noted comic book and science fiction masters including; Harvey Kurtzman, Jean “Moebius” Giraud, Alfredo Alcala, Wendy Pini, Philip K. Dick, Linda Barry, Sergio Aragones, Kelly Freas, and Rick Griffin.

Yeh was the first journalist to interview Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel in 1975 about the injustices both he and artist Joe Shuster suffered for many decades. That article led to national

media coverage and a settlement at that time with Yeh working on the West Coast and Jerry Robinson and Neal Adams on the East Coast.

In 1977, Yeh wrote, illustrated, and published one of the first modern American graphic novels (“*Even Cazco Gets the Blues*”) with introductions by Golden Age artist Don Rico and Sergio Aragones. He was one of the first publishers of graphic novels to push for acceptance of this art form in general bookstores and libraries.

In 1985, Yeh formed Cartoonists across America & the World to promote literacy, the arts, and creativity using humor and comics. To date the group of artists has painted more than 1800 murals in 49 U.S. states and 18 countries.

In 1989, Yeh was given the Bob Clampett Humanitarian Award by the San Diego Comic-Con and in 2009 received an Ink Pot Award at the San Diego Con. In 1990, the Hungarian Government issued a postage stamp with Yeh’s “Read. Avoid Extinction” dinosaurs in honor of the United Nations Year of Literacy. In 1991, Yeh’s oil paintings were featured in “Theo the Dinosaur”, which debuted at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. with introductions by Barbara Bush and Nigel Seale, chairperson of Earth Day International.

In 1993, Yeh’s wordless graphic novel “*The Winged Tiger*” with illustrated introductions by Wendy Pini and Jean Giraud was published as a weapon in the global fight against illiteracy. It was named one of the top 25 graphic novels in print. In 2007, NBM issued a full color hardcover graphic novel of “*Dinosaurs Across America*”. The 2008 edition was picked as one of the top 25 graphic novels by “*School Library Journal*” and was a Children’s Choice Award winner by the Children’s Book Council and the International Reading Association.

Yeh continues to tour the world and speaks to thousands of people every year. For more information about Yeh’s more than 90 published books and his tour go to www.wingedtiger.com



One of our recent murals in Ry, Denmark