

Wallace “Wally” Amos, Jr.



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On July 1, 1936, Wallace Amos, Jr. was born in Tallahassee, FL where he would live until the age of twelve. After his parents divorced he moved to Manhattan, New York to live with his aunt Della. While living with his aunt Amos found a love for cookies and baking. His aunt was the first to introduce him to baking chocolate chip cookies, which would change his life forever. His love for baking would lead him to enrolling into the Food Trades Vocational High School. At the high school he would take his aunts cookie recipe and improve on it ultimately creating his “Famous Amos” cookie recipe. Before Amos could complete high school he dropped out and joined the United States Air Force. While in the Air Force he gained his high school equivalency diploma before earning an honorable discharge.

After the Air Force Amos had to earn a living, so he began working in the stock room at Saks Fifth Avenue. He was constantly over worked and under paid until he decided to quit Saks Fifth Avenue

and try his hand in the entertainment industry. His first taste of the industry was with the William Morris Talent Agency. Similar to his start at Saks Fifth Avenue he had to work his way up. Amos started working in the mail room but that would only last a year. He became the first black talent agent at William Morris. His promotion would turn out to be a great move for the agency and “Famous” Amos. Mr. He would go on to book such acts as The Supremes, Simon & Garfunkel and Marvin Gaye.

Taking all he learned from the William Morris Talent Agency Amos started his own theatrical management agency. His next step was to pack up and move to Los Angeles, California. There he started baking again as a way to relax him from his days. His leisure cookie baking turned into an idea for a gourmet cookie stand. Amos was able to borrow \$25,000 and built the first freestanding store on Sunset Boulevard, in Hollywood, California. Famous Amos cookies were born. Amos used his knowledge of show business to create a unique and successful marketing plan for his cookies. In 1985 Amos would lose control of the Famous Amos Cookie brand, but would later bounce back with his Uncle Wally’s Muffin Company.

Amos would find a new focus in life after show business and baking, he focused his attention on battling illiteracy. He served as the national spokesperson for Literacy Volunteers of America from 1979 to 2002. He also served on the boards of the National Center for Family Literacy, Read to Me International, and Communities in Schools. In 2005 Amos and his wife co-founded the Chip & Cookie Read Aloud Foundation. Amos has also received the President’s Award for Entrepreneurial Excellence, the Horatio Alger Award, and the National Literacy Honors Award. Wally Amos is an author of eight books, a motivational speaker and a true role model. His latest project is baking cookies as the “Cookie Kahuna” in Oahu, in Kailua Town, Hawaii. “Famous” Amos has touched the hearts, stomachs, and lives of many people worldwide. He used his fame to uplift others and help future generations thrive. Mr. Wallace “Wally” Amos, we stand on your shoulders.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PtmAa5vIBk&t=5s>

J.A. Ward.

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