

celebrating
GENERAL MILLS 75 years... and still cooking



innovation invention food & fun

THE PILLSBURY DOUGHBOY™



The *Pillsbury Doughboy* got his start on the road to fame in Chicago. He has since become an icon of American advertising known around the world.

In 1965 a small group at the Leo Burnett advertising agency sat around a table surrounded by cans of dough trying to create an advertising and marketing campaign for Pillsbury's refrigerated dough account. Rudy Perz, a copywriter at the time, popped open one of the cans and envisioned an image of a doughboy popping out. The "spokescritter" was dubbed "Poppin' Fresh," personifying the product's freshness and quality. Perz's first inclination was to animate the *Doughboy* with illustration, but changed his mind after seeing the stop-action motion technique used in the credits of "The Dinah Shore Show," which he liked better. The ad agency's founder, Leo Burnett, thought the character was a great idea, as did Pillsbury.

More than 50 actors auditioned for the voice of the *Doughboy*. Paul Frees, the voice of Boris Badenov in "The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle" among others, was chosen. His first words were, "Hi! I'm Poppin' Fresh, the Pillsbury Doughboy," followed by "Nothin' says lovin' like bakin' in the oven, and Pillsbury says it best." When Frees died in 1986, Jeff Bergman, the voice of Charlie the Tuna, took over. Currently, JoBe Cerny portrays the Doughboy.

Within three years of his debut in 1965 in a crescent roll commercial, the *Doughboy* had an 87 percent recognition factor among consumers.

Through the years, the *Doughboy* advertising has changed slightly. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, he was seen as a helper, friend and instructor to family cooks. The *Doughboy* has been featured in numerous commercials over the years, and is very versatile. He has been an opera singer, a rap artist, a rock star, a poet, a painter, a ballet dancer, a skydiver and skateboarder. He has also been seen playing the harmonica, accordion, bugle, electric guitar and violin.



While computer technology has changed the way the *Doughboy* is created, his motions have been programmed in as they were when he was made as a plaster and foam rubber bendable puppet. The initial doll cost \$16,000 to develop, and he had five bodies and 15 heads to create numerous looks and positions in the ads. Prior to its computerization, it took 24 individual shots for every one second of commercial for the *Doughboy's* stop-motion animation, which was originally done by Cascade Studios in Hollywood. From the beginning, he has been dressed in a chef's hat bearing the Pillsbury logo as well as a white neckerchief, and he still is considered a teacher and friend to cooks of all kinds.

As of 1998, the *Doughboy* received 200 fan letters a week, and Pillsbury received 1,500 requests for autographed photos. Other indications of the character's popularity include first place in "Marketing Evaluation, Inc." as the most recognizable and favorite spokescharacter (1996), favorite food product character among consumers in "Cartoon Q" survey (1996), first place in *Advertising Age* "Whom do You Love?" contest (1987), and "Toy of the Year" according to *Playthings* magazine (1972), just a year after his release as a 7-inch vinyl doll.

The *Doughboy* has become a global icon whose smile and cheery disposition transcend language and cultural barriers everywhere.