

# The Funny Guy Behind The Funny Guys

by Justin Childress

November 13 2021 7:15 AM



## The Funny Guy Behind The Funny Guys

By Justin Childress

At first glance, you may expect him to give a lesson on long division or discuss atoms and molecules in some high school or college somewhere. You sure wouldn't expect him to be one of the most under-the-radar kings of comedy. Harold Ramis was the

funny guy who made more popular funny guys at the time, like Bill Murray, John Belushi, and Chevy Chase even funnier.

The original member of the “Ghostbusters” and Chicago native died suddenly in 2014 from a rare disease called Autoimmune Inflammatory Vasculitis. He would have turned 76 this month.

Ramis was involved in some of the funniest and most popular comedies of all time. An underrated comedic performer, writer, and director, he started his comedy skills from the National Lampoon Radio Hour from 1973-74 where he collaborated with legends like Chevy Chase, John Belushi, and Bill Murray, he and Murray became fast friends.

The comedy radio show attracted the attention of Lorne Michaels who was producing a sketch comedy show called “Saturday Night”, the show as we all know would be renamed “Saturday Night Live”.

The majority of the radio stars went on to be the not-ready-for primetime players, but Ramis went to Second City Television instead. The Canadian answer to Saturday Night Live. There Harold acted alongside other big names like John Candy. SCT only lasted one season in 1976. Still, National Lampoon wanted to go Hollywood and take Ramis with them. They succeeded with a college comedy just two years later which Ramis co-wrote with many of the National Lampoon alum called “Animal House”. The smash-hit led to the directorial debut of Ramis, the golf comedy “Caddyshack” in 1980. It too was a hit with two SNL members co-starring Chevy Chase and Bill Murray.

His hit streak seemed nonstop with just a year later Ramis co-wrote and co-starred in the military comedy “Stripes”. Starring his friend and frequent collaborator Bill Murray.

National Lampoon wasn’t done with the versatile filmmaker. Ramis sat in the director’s chair once again showcasing the struggling family man Clark Griswold and all his problems with family in tow. “Vacation” was a super hit that started a franchise and Chevy Chase’s career in 1983.

The following year we knew who to call when we had ghost problems in New York. Co-written and co-starring Ramis, “Ghostbusters” exceeded everyone’s expectations and was a monster hit in the theaters and making his friend Bill Murray a big star.

For all of his hits “Groundhog Day” in 1993 was probably his most memorable showing a hilarious and softer side of Bill Murray. Tragically the two would have a falling out a few years after the movie wrapped and Ramis died before the two could make amends.

You touched funny bones for decades and decades to come Happy Birthday in Heaven Egon.

*Jerseyville resident, Justin Childress, loves movies and has been writing about them for as long as he can remember. You may contact him at [jchilli1981@gmail.com](mailto:jchilli1981@gmail.com).*

Originally published in [Buzz Magazine](#) - November 2021.