

Herb Butterfield

Brian Kavanaugh

Herbert Butterfield was born October 28, 1895 in Providence, Rhode Island and attended Brown University, before joining the Army and serving in Europe during World War I. While serving with the Army of Occupation after the war, he attended the University of London. Upon returning to the states, he served as an assistant drama coach at the University of Iowa while earning a master's degree.

After that, he toured the country working as a stock and Shakespearean stage actor, most notably in Chicago, Detroit, and New England. In 1936, Butterfield moved to Chicago and began his radio career. One of his first recurring roles was as Preacher Jim in the serial detective drama *Kitty Keene, Inc.*

In 1946, he and his wife Mildred moved to Los Angeles, where they would remain for the rest of their lives. It was there where his radio career really took off, and he regularly appeared in some of the biggest radio dramas – particularly detective and crime dramas – of the era. Among the many shows Butterfield frequented included *Suspense*, *Yours Truly*, *Johnny Dollar*, *Cavalcade of America*, *Lux Radio Theater*, *Jeff Regan*, *Investigator*, *Let George Do It*, *Broadway's My Beat*, and many more. He was a regular on NBC's popular *Halls of Ivy*, playing Ivy College Chairman of the Board Dr. Clarence Wellman, and played a character known only as "The Commissioner" on NBC's *Dangerous Assignment*. He was also the last person to play the role of Inspector Richard Queen on the radio version of ABC's *The Adventures of Ellery Queen*.

In the 1950s, Butterfield began branching off into movies and television, appearing in a handful of *Dragnet* and *Lux Video Theatre* episodes, the movies *The House on Telegraph Hill* and *Shield for Murder*, and several other television series and movies. He also reprised his roles in the television versions of *Halls of Ivy* and *Dangerous Assignment* as Dr. Clarence Wellman and The Commissioner, respectively.

His career was cut short after battling a heart condition for several weeks, ultimately passing on May 2, 1957 at the age of 61. His obituary in *The Van Nuys News* noted that Butterfield was, "One of the Southland's most popular and beloved members of the entertainment world...long known for his role interpretations in stage productions, on radio and in television."

References:

Death takes actor Herbert Butterfield. (1957, May 4). *Los Angeles Times*, II8.

Herb Butterfield. (2021, November 29). In *Wikipedia*.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Herb Butterfield&oldid=1047138395](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Herb_Butterfield&oldid=1047138395)

Plan chapel rites tomorrow for actor Herbert Butterfield (1957, May 5). *Van Nuys News and Valley Green Sheet*, A5.