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Marc Hannibal dies at 80

Was actor, singer, Harlem Globetrotter

By [Variety Staff](#)

Actor, singer and former Harlem Globetrotter Marc Hannibal died in Salem, Ore., of natural causes on July 23. He was 80.

Hannibal made his TV acting debut in 1963 on "CBS Repertoire Workshop," narrating the story of the historical Dred Scott Supreme Court case.

The following parenthetical insert is from Time Magazine, Friday, Jan. 11, 1963 and is not in the Variety article

("In St. Louis one evening last week, a tall, commanding-looking Negro in a dark suit and vest walked into the main rotunda of the city's Old Courthouse. For 30 minutes, he stood there and told TV viewers the story of the slave Sam Blow who picked up the nickname Great Scott—pronounced Dred Scott in Sam Blow's Gullah accent—whose suit was tried twice in that courthouse, in 1847 and in 1850.

It was a kind of lecture, really, with choral interludes by costumed singers, discussing the illiterate man whose petition for freedom was finally turned down by the U.S. Supreme Court. The lecturer was Marc Hannibal, formerly a professional basketball player with the razzle-dazzle Harlem Globetrotters. He had never before been on television, and that was the whole idea. ")***

In New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Philadelphia, similar programs were broadcast at the same time, using little-known or totally unknown young performers. This is the CBS Repertoire Workshop, a joint project of the five TV stations owned by the network, intended not as a fling for amateurs but as a springboard for apprentice professionals. Each station will produce seven shows, and all 35 will be seen in all five cities.

He went on to star in several variety shows, including "Hannibal's Trunk." Hannibal guested on series including "Dragnet," "Adam 12" and "Mission Impossible" and appeared in films including "Airport," "Fools," "The Strangers in 7A" and "The Grasshopper." In 1975, he starred in the Italian cult film "Superuomini, superdonne, superbotte" (known by various English titles including "Three Fantastic Supermen") as a gladiator superhero.

In 1976 he produced and starred in a variety show called "On the Strip," live from Las Vegas.

As a singer, he headlined nightclubs across North America in the 1960s, once opening for Phyllis Diller at Gaslight Square in St. Louis, and headlined The Sands and Union Plaza hotels in Las Vegas in the 1970s. He recorded two albums: the first, anonymously titled disc was for Philips, the second, "Night Times," for independent label First American. In 2002 his song "Forever Is a Long, Long Time" was sampled by Royce Da 5'9" for the latter's song "Boom," which appeared on the album "Rock City (version 2.0)" as well as on the soundtrack of MTV's 2001 telepic "Hip Hopera: Carmen." Hannibal's music career was chronicled in the book "The First Book of Oregon Jazz, Rock and All Sorts of Music" by Carolan Gladden.

Frank Charles Hannibal Jr. was born in St. Louis. After graduating from Benson Polytechnic High School in Portland, Ore., as a star basketball player, he served briefly in the Army. In 1954, Hannibal was recruited by the Harlem Globetrotters and toured with the team for two years. He then played with Marques Haynes' barnstorming team, the Harlem Magicians.

Hannibal is survived by three daughters and a son.

*** Mr. Marc Hannibal also contributed to an album recording, *The Voice of the Lord*, reading the voice of Jesus along with the great-grandson of Dred Scott, John A. Madison, Jr. who narrated the album. The recording included the renowned Legend Singers under the direction of Mr. Kenneth Billups and was produced @1966 in St. Louis, MO.