



RETIRED MEN'S ASSOCIATION OF GREENWICH, Inc. (RMA)
Invites you to its meeting March 2, 2022, at 11:00 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church, Lafayette Place, Greenwich, CT
The program will also be shown on Webinar: <https://bit.ly/30IBj21>

Leslee Asch

“Puppetry as an Art Form - The Legacy of Jim Henson”



What is the first name that comes to mind when you hear the word *puppet*? It is likely Jim Henson.

Many books and thousands of pages have been written about the beloved American icon's life and work, but *Out of the Shadows*, written by Leslee Asch, is the first to focus solely on his love of, and impact on, puppetry as a vital contemporary art form. This is an important and previously unexplored aspect of the Henson legacy.

The author will highlight some of the important connections Connecticut and Greenwich have to this ancient and yet continually evolving art form. The University of Connecticut, since 1965, has been conferring undergraduate and graduate degrees in puppetry, through its Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry. And, since 1990, the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, CT has had puppetry as

one of its six core conferences.

Leslee worked for Jim Henson for over twenty years. She began her career as a puppet builder. Her first project was casting latex shoes for the marionette versions used in the now classic *Emmet Otter's Jugband Christmas*. She also had a hand in building a little red monster who, in the hands of a gifted performer, grew up to become the beloved Elmo; and she built the original Boober for *Fraggle Rock*, a show designed to help promote world peace. She went on to serve as Director of Exhibitions for Jim Henson Productions, curating and managing exhibitions world-wide. She also served as Executive Director of the Jim Henson Foundation and Producing Director of the Henson International Festivals of Puppet Theater. She was a long-time Trustee of the Jim Henson Foundation, and now serves on the board of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center.

The Jim Henson Foundation's International Puppet Festivals, which she produced with Jim Henson's daughter Cheryl, brought puppet theater into mainstream American theater. Between 1992 and 2000, the festivals presented 136 different productions from 31 countries that were seen in 24 theaters throughout New York City. Over 120,000 people attended the New York performances.

Leslee and her husband Will Morrison have lived in Old Greenwich for nearly 30 years. She has authored, *Out of the Shadows: The Henson Festivals and Their Impact on Contemporary Puppet Theater*.

Please Note: Attendees must show proof of vaccination and booster at the door for admittance. Masks must be worn at all times in the church.

Next week, March 9: Frank McGinnis, Physical trainer at Greenwich YMCA. "Resistance Training and the Critical Role of Muscle in Aging."

The Greenwich Retired Men's Association offers a free in-person or Zoom Webinar speaker program every Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. For additional information see www.greenwichrma.org or contact us by e-mail at info@greenwichrma.org