



## Biographical Sketch

JOHN LASSETER

Director and Vice President, Creative Development  
Pixar Animation Studios

On March 25th, 1996, John Lasseter accepted the Academy Award for Special Achievement for his "inspired leadership of the Pixar Toy Story Team resulting in the first feature-length computer animated film". This was not the first award Lasseter has accepted for outstanding accomplishments, and nor his first Academy Award. In fact, his very first award came at the age of five, when he won \$15.00 from the Model Market in Whittier, California for a crayon drawing of the Headless Horseman. It was the beginning of an illustrious career.

Lasseter was born in Hollywood and grew up in Whittier, where his mother was an art teacher. In his freshman year at high school, he fell in love with cartoons and the art of animation, and began studying art and drawing. He wrote to the Walt Disney Company, seeking guidance on where and how to develop his passion. At that time, Disney was setting up an animation program at CalArts, a center for studying art, design and photography, where Lasseter became the second student to be accepted into their start-up program. He spent four years at CalArts, where two of his animated films, *Lady and the Lamp* (1979), and *Nightmare* (1980) each won the Student Academy Award.

During summer breaks Lasseter apprenticed at Disney, and upon graduation in 1979, he landed a position at the studio's feature animation division. During his five year stint with Disney, he contributed animation to such films as *The Fox and the Hound* and *Mickey's Christmas Carol*. Inspired by Disney's ambitious and innovative film *Tron*, which used computer animation to create visual effects, Lasseter teamed up with fellow animator Glen Keane to experiment. A 30-second test, based on Maurice Sendak's book *Where the Wild Things Are*, showed how traditional hand-drawn character animation could be successfully combined with computerized camera movements and environments.

In 1983, at the invitation of Pixar founder Ed Catmull, Lasseter visited the computer graphics unit, which was part of Lucasfilm at the time. He was instantly intrigued. Seeing the enormous potential that computer graphics technology held for transforming the craft of animation, he left Disney in 1984 and came to Pixar, where he quickly became an integral and catalytic force. Working closely with Supervising Technical Director Bill Reeves, Lasseter came up with the idea of imbuing a pair of desk lamps with believable characterizations, and the inspiration for *Luxo, Jr.* was born.

PIXAR ANIMATION STUDIOS

1001 WEST CUTTING, RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA 94804 TEL 510 236-4000 FAX 510 236-0388

Luxo, Jr. was the first film to garner Lasseter an Academy Award nomination in 1986, and was followed by a number of short films including Red's Dream(1987), and KnickKnack (1989), both of which were met with critical acclaim. Lasseter received his first Academy Award in 1988 for Tin Toy, which won the Best Animated Short category. He is also responsible for designing and animating the Stained Glass Knight in the 1985 Steven Speilberg production, Young Sherlock Holmes.

Toy Story, Lasseter's first feature, was the highest grossing film of 1995. In addition to the Academy's Special Achievement Award, Toy Story received the Los Angeles Film Critics Award for Best Animated Film, the Producer's Guild of America Award for Special Achievement, the Chicago Film Critics Award for Best Original Score, the Flammy Award for Best Picture, and the Golden Reel Awards for Animated Features Sound Editing. In addition, Toy Story was nominated for Academy Awards for Best Screenplay Written Directly For The Screen, Best Achievement in Music (original musical or comedy score), and Best Achievement in Music (original song), as well as Golden Globe nominations for Best Motion Picture - Musical or Comedy and Best Original Song.

John Lasseter and his wife, Nancy, have four children ranging in age from 3 to 15. They live in Northern California.