Beat: Entertainment

Actor John Dunsworth

Before Trailer Park Boys

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USPA NEWS - For most of the world, John Dunsworth's name is inseparable from one role: Jim Lahey in Trailer Park Boys. But that character arrived late. By the time it turned him into a household figure, Dunsworth had already logged decades of work on stage, in television studios, and through the relentless grind of commercial shoots across Atlantic Canada.

His performance as Sunnyvale's perpetually intoxicated trailer park supervisor became one of Canada's most celebrated comedy roles and introduced a Nova Scotian actor to an international audience.

Born in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, in 1946, Dunsworth's path into acting did not begin in front of a camera. He became deeply involved in Halifax's theatre community during the 1970s, John was a common face at Neptune Theatre as one of the country's leading regional playhouses. As both an actor and director, he developed a commanding stage presence that made him equally comfortable performing Shakespeare, contemporary drama and comedy. Theatre remained a constant throughout his life, even after television made him famous.

One notable credit to John, and something that's often true among many theatrically trained actors, is his ability to do anything. Whatever a role required of him, he'd take to like a fish to water. That requires skill.

By the late 1970s and during 1980s, Dunsworth had also become one of the most familiar faces on Atlantic Canadian television beginning with Halifax Cablevision. Anyone who grew up in Nova Scotia during that era likely saw him in local commercials, public service announcements and promotional campaigns. Whether selling everyday products or appearing in regional advertising, he possessed an approachable, distinctly Maritime quality that made him instantly believable, if not comedically so. These performances rarely received much attention, but they made Dunsworth a recognizable figure in living rooms across the province years before his biggest role arrived.

Sadly, John Dunsworth died from a short and unexpected illness on October 16, 2017, at the age of 71.

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