

HOLIDAY Traditions

Reminiscing With The Creator Of “Frosty The Snowman”

(NAPSA)—Frosty the Snowman is one of America’s most enduring holiday icons. The jolly, happy soul first made his debut in 1950 as the title character of Steve Nelson and Jack Rollins’ now legendary song “Frosty the Snowman,” sung by Gene Autry. The song became an instant hit and has since been recorded by such music industry greats as Bing Crosby, the Beach Boys, Willie Nelson and the Jackson 5, among others. Later that same year, Frosty was featured in Annie North Bedford’s timeless children’s book of the same name which was based on the original song. In 1969, Frosty finally appeared before television audiences in the animated classic “Frosty the Snowman” on CBS. And now, more than four decades since his creation, the excitement of Frosty continues. This year, the roly-poly snowman will be featured on an extensive new line of apparel, gifts and home furnishings available at Mervyn’s stores.

The fact that Frosty’s likeness will grace items from pajamas and boxers to holiday ornaments, jewelry, towels and accent rugs, comes as no surprise to his designer, renowned illustrator, Paul Coker, Jr. “I think it’s a terrific idea,” says Coker. “Frosty is, without question, the most famous character I’ve ever illustrated and when people find out I drew him, they can’t believe it. It touches them on a nostalgic level,” Coker continued.

Coker, 72, was working in New York as an illustrator at *Mad Magazine* when he was introduced to producer Arthur Rankin, half of



Frosty the Snowman has been melting hearts for generations. This year, the holiday icon will be featured on a new line of clothes and gifts at Mervyn’s.

Rankin/Bass, the partnership responsible for “Frosty the Snowman,” “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” and other animated holiday classics. Coker explains how he came on board the project: “Arthur sent me the script and the story was good. Although I’d heard the song, I’d never seen the book. So I came up with the concept of a jolly snowman and put a top hat

on him with a little flower in the hatband, a corn cob pipe, coal eyes. I added a scarf and broom to give him human-like characteristics.” Coker sent his concept drawings to Rankin and partner Jules Bass who approved them immediately. “Frosty” quickly moved on to the storyboard phase and then to Japan where the half-hour special was fully animated.

“Frosty the Snowman” hit the small screen on CBS in December of 1969, featuring the voice talents of comedian Jackie Vernon as Frosty and character actor Billy DeWolfe as The Magician. Since its original broadcast, “Frosty the Snowman” has aired on the network every year, earning it the reputation as the second most watched holiday special in CBS history.

“Frosty has great longevity,” says Coker. “Adults who as kids first watched him on television 30 years ago are now watching him with their own kids. Frosty has a very warm, nostalgic quality that’s very appealing to young and old alike. I’m very pleased to have been associated with him.”

Coker feels Mervyn’s new Frosty merchandise will be a big hit with shoppers. “There are so many people who would love to have their own little piece of Frosty. It seems like such a natural thing, I can’t believe it hasn’t been done before,” Coker said.

Frosty fans looking to purchase some of the new custom line of merchandise can visit www.mervyns.com to find the nearest Mervyn’s store in their area.