

'Wizard of Oz' Munchkin Ruth Robinson Duccini dies

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In this Nov. 20, 2007, file photo, The Munchkins from "The Wizard of Oz" pose as they honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at Grauman's Chinese Theatre, site of the film's 1939 premiere, in Los Angeles. The Munchkins cast members, from left: Clarence Swensen, a Munchkin soldier, Jerry Maren, part of the Lollipop Guild; Mickey Carroll, the Town Crier; Karl Slover, the Main Trumpeter; Ruth Duccini, a Munchkin villager; Margaret Pelligrini, the "sleepyhead" Munchkin and Meinhardt Raabe, the coroner. Ruth Robinson Duccini, 95, one of the two surviving Munchkins from the legendary film, died early Thursday in Las Vegas. AP photo/Damian Dovarganes

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Ruth Robinson Duccini, the last of the original female Munchkins from the 1939 movie "The Wizard of Oz," has died. She was 95.

With her death, only one actor who played one of the original 124 Munchkins in the movie remains alive.

Duccini died of natural causes in Solari Hospice Care Center in Las Vegas on Thursday.

Her death was confirmed by Stephen Cox, author of "The Munchkins of Oz." He says he learned of it from Duccini's son.

Duccini, born in Rush City, Minn., traveled to California with a troupe of little people, and was cast in the MGM fantasy movie starring Judy Garland. Duccini was 4 feet tall.

Cox provided a recent statement made by Duccini about her time on the movie set.

"It was long hours and heavy costumes. We didn't have much time for ourselves. It was all new to me then, and I loved being a part of what is now a classic," she said.

Duccini met her husband while working at MGM, and the two had a son and daughter.

She worked as a "Rosie the Riveter" in Santa Monica, Calif., during World War II, using her short stature to squeeze into hard-to-reach parts of planes. She also appeared in the spoof "Under the Rainbow" starring Chevy Chase and Carrie Fisher.

In her later years, Duccini appeared at festivals and screenings celebrating "The Wizard of Oz."

The only surviving original Munchkin is Jerry Maren, 93, of Los Angeles, who portrayed a member of the Lollipop Guild.