

# **WALT DISNEY'S CHOW "SUNNEE" INSPIRES MOVIE**

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## Walt Disney and wife with their first dog

Walt placed the puppy in a hat box as a gift for his wife which inspired the scene in Lady and the Tramp where Lady is taken out of a hat box as a Christmas present.



## **A personal account of the gift for his wife Lily by Walt Disney himself**

"I went out and bought a chow and I kept it under wraps. On Christmas Eve I picked my chow up from the dog kennel and I took it over, kept it in a big hat box. I got a big ribbon on it. When the time came, I went over and put the little puppy in the hat box, tied it up with a ribbon. So, my wife didn't see me bring it in. My niece went over and she said, "Oh, it says to 'Lilly from Santy Claus!'"

So, she brought this big hat box over and put it in front of my wife. And my wife said, "Oh, Walt! You didn't?!" She didn't know I bought a dog. She thought I bought her a hat! So, she started to open it and it moved. When she opened it this little chow stuck its head out. And from that time on, that was her baby." – Walt Disney

**BELOW IS A VIDEO WITH WALT HIMSELF TELLING THE ABOVE STORY  
(Courtesy the Disney Family Museum)**

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WALT DISNEY' S WIFE LILLY WITH HER CHOW  
Source <http://www.waltdisney.org>

Photo credit and text below from  
<http://www.waltdisney.org/blog/walts-valentine>

*Soon after they bought their first home in Los Angeles, Walt wanted a dog. Lilly, however, was not sold on the idea. Walt was determined. He bought a book on dogs and while reading it to Lilly, the Chow Chow caught her attention. She decided that if she had to have a dog, she would be fine with a Chow. The next day, Walt went out and bought a Chow puppy but kept it a secret until Christmas. While Walt and Lilly celebrated Christmas Eve with family at their home, Walt snuck the puppy into a hatbox, topped it with a large bow, and slipped it under the tree.*

*Lilly was given the box and was, at first, rather disappointed: she loved to buy her own hats. Suddenly, the box moved and Lilly let out a scream as a little puppy poked its head out! From that moment on, Lilly was smitten with the dog they named Sunnee, never letting him leave her sight. Walt shared that he “never saw anyone so crazy about an animal.” This story later became the inspiration for Walt’s film *Lady and the Tramp* when Lady pops out of the hatbox on Christmas.*



WALT DISNEY, HIS WIFE LILLY AND THEIR CHOW

