

Beat: Vips

Ghostbusters; star Harold Ramis dead at 69

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USPA News - Actor, writer and director Harold Ramis, who is best remembered for films such as "Ghostbusters," "Groundhog Day," and "Analyze This," died at his Illinois home on Monday after suffering from a long illness, his representative said. He was 69. Chris Day, a spokesman for United Talent Agency, which represented the actor for many years, said Ramis died on Monday morning while surrounded by family and friends at his home in the Chicago area.

He died of complications related to auto-immune inflammatory vasculitis which he battled for the past four years. "His creativity, compassion, intelligence, humor and spirit will be missed by all who knew and loved him," Day said. Born in Chicago, Ramis got his start in comedy in 1969 at Chicago's Second City improvisational theatre troupe while still employed as Associate Editor at Playboy Magazine. His breakthrough came in 1978 when he co-wrote the blockbuster comedy "National Lampoon's Animal House." Ramis went on to co-write the 1981 movie "Stripes," the 1984 movie "Ghostbusters," and the 1989 sequel "Ghostbusters II," movies in which he also co-starred. He will also be remembered for the popular 1993 movie "Groundhog Day," which he co-wrote, produced and directed. The 1993 movie, which starred actor Bill Murray as local weatherman Phil Connors, made Groundhog Day an internationally known annual event. In the movie, Connors finds himself stuck in a personal time loop that repeats February 2 over and over while he is on a hated assignment to cover Groundhog Day. In December 2006, the Library of U.S. Congress added "Groundhog Day" to its film preservation list that was established to ensure "culturally, historically or aesthetically" significant movies are preserved forever. There are currently 625 movies on the list. Ramis' work throughout the years earned him an American Comedy award, a British Comedy award, and a BAFTA award for screenwriting, among other awards. The actor is survived by his wife Erica, two sons, Julian and Daniel, daughter Violet, and two grandchildren.

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