

STAR WARS

a history



May 25, 1977

Star Wars: A New Hope premiered. It grossed a total of \$775 million.

November 27, 1978

A Star Wars Holiday Special aired only once and was never released to home video: Anthony Daniels (C3PO) referred to it as "The horrible Holiday Special that nobody talks about"

May 21, 1980

Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back was released. It became the highest grossing sequel of all time and is preserved in the National Film Registry



May 16, 2002

Star Wars: Attack of the Clones premiered, became the first Star Wars film to be out-grossed in its year of release, placing only third domestically and fourth internationally

May 19, 1995

Star Wars: The Phantom Menace was released, revamping the series. It also introduces Jar Jar Binks, who the Huffington Post referred to as "an all-around terrible creature"

May 25, 1983

Star Wars: Return of the Jedi, premiered, marking what was then assumed to be the end of the series



May 19, 2005

Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith completes the prequel series, showing audiences the birth of Darth Vader

October 3, 2008

Cartoon Network premiered Star Wars: The Clone Wars, an animated series.

December 18, 2015

Star Wars: The Force Awakens was released. It broke the record for the highest grossing opening of all time.



THE LEGACY AWAKENS



One of the most popular and successful film franchises of all time entered its third era in December 2015 with the release of *The Force Awakens*. This movie was the seventh installment in the Star Wars film series.

The movie broke the box office record for highest grossing opening weekend making a total of nearly \$248 billion.

For months prior to its release, the internet was abuzz with constant news and rumors regarding the new addition to the myths, and anticipation among fans was high.

Leif Albertson, sr., is a huge fan of Star Wars, and he was among those excited to get more.

"I'd been waiting for the movie for about 10 years, since 2005 when the last one came out," Albertson said.

However, Albertson explained that he was a little bit disappointed in this new movie, especially in regards to its incorporation of elements from the classic Star Wars films.

"I was really hoping that they would use more of the characters they decided to bring back, whereas I found that it was more about the new characters, which is fine, but if you're going to do that you should find a happy medium," Albertson said.

Despite any complaints, though, Albertson said that he will still absolutely be back in the theater for the next installment of the series.

"Now they're in a position where they've gotten all the hard stuff out of the way," Albertson said. "Now that they've set everything up and we have to live with it, they can focus on the stuff we like."

Nick Hayes, a science teacher at Kennedy, was a junior in high school the last time a movie event similar to this took place. In 1999, the movie *The Phantom Menace* was released, which marked the beginning of the prequel trilogy of Star Wars films. That movie was the first Star Wars movie to be released in 16 years. It was followed by *Attack of the Clones* in 2002 and *Revenge of the Sith* in 2005.

"As somebody who kind of grew up on Star Wars and was a huge fan...there was a lot of excitement," Hayes said. "We saw the first trailer [for *Phantom Menace*] and we were like, 'wow, that's the most awesome thing ever.'"

The prequel trilogy has largely been judged by history and by fans to be a disappointment in comparison to the originals, but according to Hayes, it wasn't necessarily that way at the time.

"I remember coming out of the movie thinking 'that was great,' because more Star Wars was more Star Wars, which was everything you wanted back then," Hayes said. "But the more you watched that first episode, you started to realize some of the flaws that existed. It just didn't feel like what you grew up with, so I think over time it bittered a little bit."

Having lived through the pre-release hype of both the prequel trilogy and *The Force Awakens*, Hayes noted a different attitude leading up to the films.

"When the prequels came out, it was mostly a mystery. All you had was a trailer or two. You had nothing else to go off of, so you went in kind of blind," Hayes said. "Now you have several trailers, they're all released on YouTube, you have pictures and behind-the-scenes footage that are leaked, you have everybody's speculation at your fingertips...I think there's almost more excitement because more people are able to get their opinion out there and there's a much more wide discussion."

As someone who had seen new Star Wars before, Hayes had a slightly different perspective than that of a student when it came to pre-movie anticipation.

"You always worry that things won't live up to our expectation," Hayes said. "I just go in optimistic and hope to find some enjoyment in it. I've got to say, though, that I was pretty excited for the new one, mostly because, even in the trailers, it looked like and felt like the Star Wars I grew up with. Maybe it was just seeing the *Millennium Falcon* again, but it looked familiar."

Deb Aldrich, PhD, a language arts teacher at Kennedy, was able to see the original Star Wars movie in 1977. The release of that movie wasn't met with nearly the hype of the films that followed, because of course no one knew what Star Wars was.

"I saw it with friends, when one of my friends said, 'hey, let's go see this Star Wars movie,'" Aldrich said. "We had no idea it would be such a hit."

Aldrich has since seen the rest of the Star Wars movies and plans to see the new movie with her son.

The release of *The Force Awakens* is the first step in the release of several new Star Wars movies. The next is scheduled for release on Mar. 26, 2017.

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