“A person’s a person, no matter how small,” Theodor Seuss Geisel, a.k.a. Dr. Seuss, would say. “Children want the same things we want. To laugh, to be challenged, to be entertained and delighted.”

Brilliant, playful, and always respectful of children, Dr. Seuss charmed his way into the consciousness of four generations of youngsters and parents. In the process, he helped millions of kids learn to read.

Dr. Seuss was born Theodor Geisel in Springfield, Massachusetts, on March 2, 1904. After graduating from Dartmouth College in 1925, he went to Oxford University, intending to acquire a doctorate in literature. At Oxford, Geisel met Helen Palmer, whom he wed in 1927. Upon his return to America later that year, Geisel published cartoons and humorous articles for Judge, the leading humor magazine in America at that time. His cartoons also appeared in major magazines such as Life, Vanity Fair, and Liberty. Geisel gained national exposure when he won an advertising contract for an insecticide called Flit. He coined the phrase, “Quick, Henry, the Flit!” which became a popular expression.

Geisel published his first children’s book, And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street, in 1937, after 27 publishers rejected it. The Cat in the Hat, perhaps Geisel’s best-known book, was his 13th book for children and he wrote it in response to a perceived literacy crisis in the United States. When Random House published The Cat in the Hat in March of 1957, it was an immediate hit and ultimately revolutionized the way American children learned to read.

In 1968 Ted married the former Audrey Stone, who became his second wife, and also gained two stepdaughters: fifteen-year-old Lark and eleven-year-old Lea. However, for over half of his career as a children’s author, Dr. Seuss had no children.

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1984, three Academy Awards, two Emmy Awards, three Grammy Awards, and three Caldecott Honors, Geisel wrote and illustrated 45 books for children. Hundreds of millions of copies have found their way into homes and hearts around the world. While Theodor Geisel died on September 24, 1991, Dr. Seuss lives on, inspiring generations of children of all ages to explore the joys of reading.