

# R2-D2 Actor Kenny Baker Dies at 81

Boris Djuric August 14, 2016



**The 3ft 8in British actor starred in six Star Wars films as well as The Elephant Man, Time Bandits and Flash Gordon.**

([Newswire.net](#) -- August 14, 2016) -- Kenny Baker, the British actor who played R2-D2 in the Star Wars films, lost the battle after a long illness and died at the age of 81, [The Guardian reports](#).

Baker's fame began with his role as the iconic R2-D2 droid from the Star Wars films. After shooting the first trilogy, 3ft 8in tall Baker starred in *The Elephant Man*, *Time Bandits* and *Flash Gordon*. He completed his acting career by getting back inside R2-D2 in Star Wars episode I, II and III, completing the cycle.

Actor Ewan McGregor, who succeeded Sir Alec Guinness as Obi-Wan Kenobi, tweeted: "So sorry to hear about this. It was lovely working with Kenny."

"Goodbye #KennyBaker A lifelong loyal friend-I loved his optimism & determination He WAS the droid I was looking for!" wrote actor Mark Hamill (Luke Skywalker).

Baker's niece, Abigail Shield, told *The Guardian* that the departure of Kenny "was expected." She added that Kenny had a "very long and fulfilled life."

"He brought lots of happiness to people and we'll be celebrating the fact that he was well loved throughout the world. We're all very proud of what he achieved in his lifetime," said Shield.

Growing up as a "little person" was tough. Baker's parents were told he wouldn't survive his teen years. However, he did extremely well in his life. Baker met his wife Eileen after his appearance on the Michael Parkinson TV show. She wrote him a letter explaining that she is a little person too and that she wanted to meet him. They married soon after. "Sadly she died of epilepsy about 20 years ago," said Shield.

Baker start acting back in the 60's as an entertainer in a stand-up comedy club. "He was part of a double act called the Mini-Tones, his partner being Jack Purvis, who sadly died after an accident with his car," said Barker's agent and lifelong friend Johnny Mans.

"Kenny also went on as a solo artiste and then eventually moved into films. Kenny was truly a great friend, one of the nicest guys you could ever wish to meet, and a fabulous and talented performer. My wife and family will miss him terribly," Mans said.

20th Century Fox, the company that made the Star Wars movies, paid tribute to Baker posting a photo of C3PO standing next to Baker's Star Wars character and wrote "Rest in peace, Kenny Baker, the heart and soul of R2D2."

Source: <http://newswire.net/newsroom/news/00093328-r2-d2-actor-kenny-baker-dies-at-81.html>