

# Comic book icon Stan Lee lived in the Five Towns

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By **Jeff Bessen**

From the Bronx to Hollywood, Stanley Martin Lieber, better known as [Stan Lee](#), made his mark in the comic book industry as a writer, editor-in-chief, publisher emeritus and creator of some the most famous comic book characters in the [Marvel Comicuniverse](#).

Lee, who was also known for making cameo appearances in the movies that became super hero franchises, died on Nov. 12. He was 95.



Comic book legend Stan Lee at the 2010 San Diego Comic Con with a fan.

In partnership with several artists, especially Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko — Lee helped create [Black Panther](#), [Daredevil](#), [Spider-Man](#), [Doctor Strange](#), the [Fantastic Four](#) — Mister Fantastic, Invisible Woman. Human Torch and Thing —

[the Hulk](#) and [X-Men](#). In collaboration with his brother, co-writer Larry Lieber, Lee created [Ant-Man](#), [Iron Man](#) and [Thor](#).

He was born in New York City on Dec. 28, 1922 to Jewish parents — Celia and Jack Lieber — who had emigrated from Romania. His family lived in Manhattan and then moved to the Bronx, where Lee attended DeWitt Clinton High School and graduated early at 16 ½ in 1939.

Lee worked several part-time jobs, including writing obituaries for a news service and press releases. He said that he dreamed of writing the “Great American Novel.” After high school he joined the WPA Federal Theatre Project, one of many Great Depression entities established to create jobs.

Family connections led to a job as an assistant in 1939 to the newly founded Timely Comics, a division of cousin-in-law Martin Goodman’s publishing company. Timely became Atlas and then changed its name to Marvel Comics.

Showing the skills and poise of someone much older, Lee became interim editor at Timely in 1941. From 1942 to 1945 he served in the Army during World War II. First he was involved in fixing communications equipment and then worked in the film division.

He married Joan Clayton Boocock on Dec. 5, 1947. They met while Joan, a British-American model, was modeling hats in New York City. Roughly two years later, the couple bought a house in Woodmere. In 1952, the family, which now included daughter Joan Celia Lee, then 2, moved to Hewlett Harbor and lived there until 1980. The family endured a tragedy when daughter Jan Lee died three days after her birth in 1953. The Lees were married 70 years until Joan’s death in 2017, at 95. Joan became a voice actor and appeared in the Spider-Man and Fantastic Four animated series in the 1990s.

Lee’s work places him in the pantheon of comic book creators along side Kirby and Will Eisner. Lee was inducted into the comic book industry’s Will Eisner Award Hall of Fame in 1994 and the Jack Kirby Hall of Fame a year later. Lee was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 2008. In 2017, he was named a Disney Legend, a Hall of Fame program that honors people who made an extraordinary and integral contributions to the Walt Disney Company.