



Diane Disney Miller talks with Sara Uddin, 12, about her computer animation work Tuesday at Disney Magnet School. —BRIAN JACKSON/SUN-TIMES

Disney's daughter dedicates magnet school's animation lab

BY MAUDLYNE IHEJIRIKA
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The daughter of the legendary Walt Disney says growing up with him as a dad was just what one would expect from a man whose creative genius has been synonymous with children and family entertainment for nearly a century.

"He was a wonderful father. I remember mostly fun and good times," said Diane Disney Miller, who was here Tuesday to dedicate a \$250,000 animation lab that her family helped fund at Disney Magnet School in Lake View.

"He was not a pusher with us. I almost wish he had been. He pushed his employees to new heights, but at home, he was loving and encouraging," said Disney Miller, who dedicated her own life to being a homemaker. "He was pleased when you did well at something, but he didn't go overboard with his praise. But believe me, I knew when he was mad."

The creator of Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck was born in 1901 on Chicago's Northwest Side, in a

now landmark cottage at 2156 N. Tripp. Young Disney lived there until 1906, when the family moved to Missouri to live on a farm.

Disney later returned to Chicago and attended McKinley High School at 2040 W. Adams, now the Cregler Multiplex. The school's quarterly magazine, the McKinley Voice, is believed the first place he published his early cartoons.

While studying drawing and photography at McKinley, Disney held part-time jobs on the L and in the Chicago Post Office. He also studied cartooning at the Academy of Fine Arts and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Despite the Disney empire's California base, his daughter says the family maintains a strong connection to Chicago.

"Our family roots are here," Disney Miller said.

According to biographies, Disney headed to Hollywood in the early 1920s with \$20 in his pocket.

"He started a little studio in a storefront building in Hollywood, and the rest is history," said Disney Miller.

Disney died in 1966 at age 65.