

# Bobby Driscoll Got His Start From Barber

By RICHARD OLSON

Citizen Entertainment Editor

How does a 8-year-old boy from an ordinary family down the block become a movie star?

"Know the right barber," is the advice of Clet (pronounced "cleat") Driscoll, father of the movie's Bobby Driscoll and a man who should know.

The senior Driscoll is in Tucson with his son for the performance here of "The Boy with a Cart" by Christopher Fry, a road-show production of the Bishop's company.

THE PLAY was presented to a capacity audience in the First Methodist church last night and will be offered twice today, at 6:45 and 8:15 p.m., in the Catalina Methodist church.

Clet, who manages Bobby's interests, and the 17-year-old star took time out during a rehearsal yesterday afternoon to talk about the happy accident of fate that put Bobby into the movies back in 1943.

"I used to take Bobby with me when I went to the barber's," Clet said. "The barber kept suggesting that we ought to put Bobby in the movies. My wife and I didn't think much about it, but one day the barber said his son was going to be home on Sunday and that he wanted his son to see Bobby."

THAT WAS the beginning. The barber's son arranged for Bobby to be seen by agents, and within two weeks the Driscolls had a call to take Bobby to the MGM studio. He went to work immediately on "Lost Angel" with Margaret O'Brien.

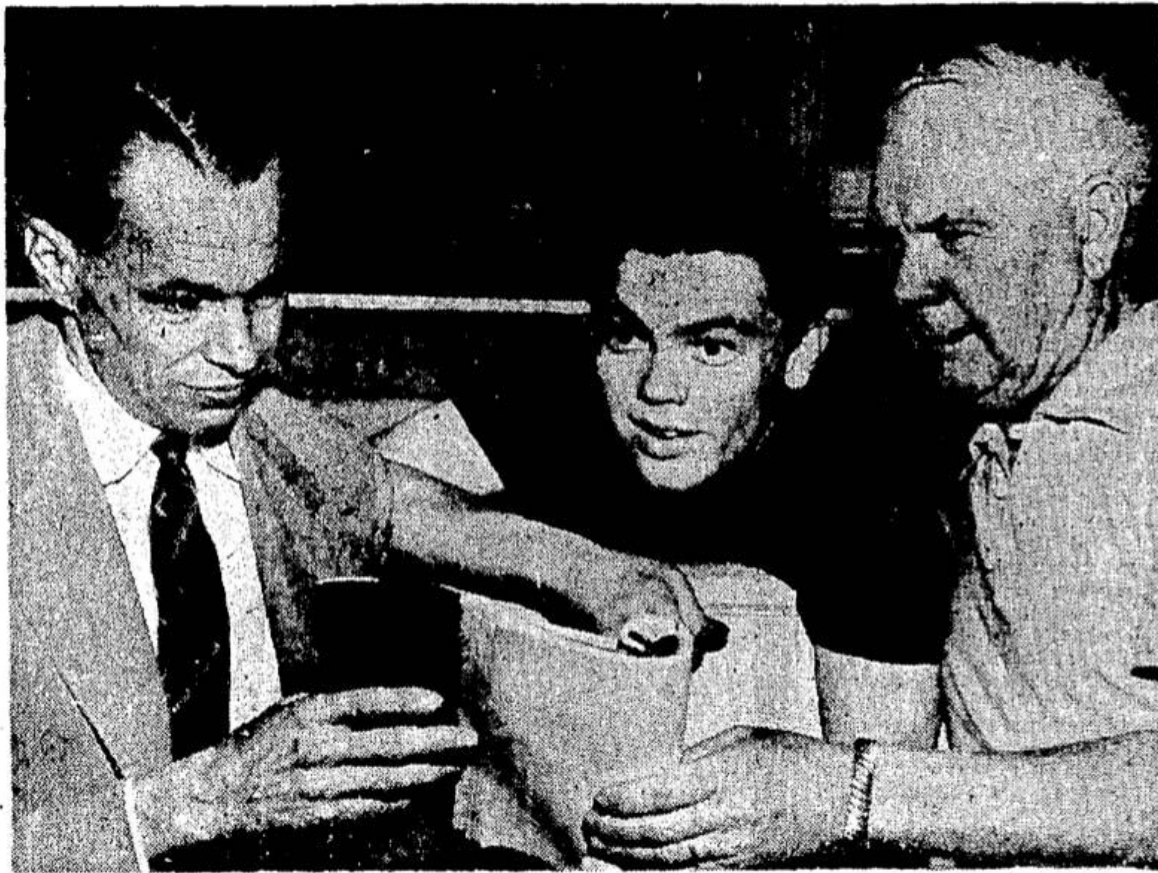
From MGM he went to 20th-Century-Fox, where he appeared in "The Sullivans." Then he went to RKO, where he was cast in the leading role of "The Window," the gripping suspense movie that was to win him an academy award.

Later Bobby was signed by the Walt Disney studio, where he made "So Dear to My Heart," "Treasure Island," and "Song of the South," among other pictures.

Bobby's last picture, made at the age of 14, was "The Happy Time" with Charles Boyer and Marsha Hunt. Produced by Stanley Kramer, the picture was made for Columbia studios on a loan-out from Disney.

MOVIES, RADIO and television all are familiar fields to Bobby, but his current venture is strictly new. Bobby's been with the Bishop's company approximately a month.

The all-professional theatrical group, formed as a personal project by Bishop Gerald Kennedy of the Southern California-Arizona Methodist Church conference, presents plays with a re-



—Citizen Photo

## SHOW BUSINESS TURNS TO THE CHURCH

Rev. Richard Dunlap (left) talks with Bobby and Clet Driscoll during rehearsal yesterday at the First Methodist church.

ligious theme but which are not typical "church plays."

"The Boy with a Cart," for example, was written by one of America's most successful playwrights. The last Fry play presented in Tucson was "The Lady's Not for Burning," produced by the University of Arizona drama department last year.

This is Bobby's first experience at working before a live audience, and he likes it.

"THERE'S NOTHING like working to people," Bobby said. "It's very gratifying. You can't see too many of the people, but you can see the first couple of rows. You can see the expressions on their faces. That's something you can't do in the movies."

But one of Bobby's first appearances with the Bishop's company almost resulted in his heading back home. It seems someone had told the church audience that the play was too serious to permit laughter or applause. So no one responded during the entire play, and Bobby was sure it was a total flop.

"I was ready to quit," Bobby said.

FORTUNATELY, the story has a happy ending. The audience finally could restrain itself no longer, and at the end of the play they clapped for several minutes straight. Bobby stayed with the company.

In fact, he plans to remain with the Bishop's players for some time. Meanwhile he plans to finish high school, get a college education, and continue on with his acting career. He may stay with the movies, go into television, or make a career of the stage itself, which appeals to him most.

But what effect has his movie

career had upon Bobby's upbringing? Except for the necessity of employing tutors and taking him out of the public schools now and then, the movie business has left Bobby a perfectly normal boy, Clet said.

IN FACT, Bobby has a girl, as most 17-year-olds do. Her name is Louise Kane, and she is the

daughter of Joseph Kane, who produced and directed "Jubilee Train."

He has a "hot rod" too, and Clet reported Bobby holds a trophy for winning a speed event at one of California's "drag strips."

"He's prouder of that trophy," Clet said, "than he is of the academy award."

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