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Written by **GERALD F. SCHNEPP**
Executive Director, Keep Iowa Beautiful

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Oct. 21 is the birthday of longtime Iowa resident, Jay Norwood “Ding” Darling. It is also Ding Darling Day as recently declared by the city of Des Moines. A dedicated conservation and Des Moines Register Pulitzer Prize winner, Ding Darling created cartoons that depicted the problems and issues with conservation and politics in the United States.

Darling, a life-time conservationist, in the 1930s was appointed the head of the newly established Federal Duck Stamp Program. Darling’s pencil sketch of mallards alighting was used on the first duck stamp.

The term duck stamp is a shortened term for the legal term “Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp.” The Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, which went into effect on July 1, 1934, authorized the annual issuance of what is popularly known as the duck stamp.

In 1976, Congress changed the official name to the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp. The stamp is required for all waterfowl hunters. It has produced well over \$100 million for migratory bird and refuge programs across the nation.

His legacy makes the point very clear that a visual — a cartoon — can carry a greater punch and have more effect than pages of narrative. The adage that “one picture is worth a 1,000 words” was clearly the basis of

the wisdom of Ding. He produced thousands of cartoons covering a wide range of topics — generally with a clear focus on our natural

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resources.

Unrelated but clearly relevant is another key date and event, six days later, on Oct. 27 we celebrate Make a Difference Day. These two events clearly indicate how the visual works of Ding Darling have and continue to "make a difference" in our lives.

A film on the life and work of Ding Darling will be premiered at the Temple for the Performing Arts in downtown Des Moines on Oct. 23.

The challenge to all of us is to get out our pencils, pens, cameras or paint brushes, and create visuals of how we want the world to be — influence others with an image! You too can make a difference.

Gerald F. Schnepf is executive director of Keep Iowa Beautiful. Contact him by phone at 515-323-6507 or email at gschnepf@keepiowabeautiful.com, or visit www.keepiowabeautiful.com.



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