NEWS RELEASE

PBS Wisconsin

WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO

Nov. 5, 2026

For Images and More Information:
Tara Lovdahl, PBS Wisconsin publicist, tara.lovdahl@pbswisconsin.org

Beloved Wisconsin authors Jerry Apps and Susan Apps-Bodilly reflect on holiday traditions in new PBS Wisconsin special

Father and daughter authors Jerry Apps and Susan Apps-Bodilly reflect on seasonal traditions and warm memories of rural winters in a new special, “Jerry Apps: Home for the Holidays.”

“Jerry Apps: Home for the Holidays” premieres 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 1, on PBS Wisconsin, The Wisconsin Channel and Create. Viewers can also watch the premiere live at pbswisconsin.org as well as on PBS Wisconsin’s YouTube channel and Facebook page.

Encore broadcasts will air 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5; 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 10; and 6:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 13. Following the premiere, the program will be available to stream at pbswisconsin.org and on the free PBS app.

“Jerry Apps: Home for the Holidays” is the ninth PBS Wisconsin special featuring Apps, who passed away in 2025. Producer Mary Pokorney-Donelan has collaborated with Apps on three specials for PBS Wisconsin since 2022.

“Jerry was an enthusiastic collaborator, and he thought the world would be a better place if we could hear each other’s stories,” Pokorney-Donelan said. “We will miss his stories and his friendship.”

Born and raised on a dairy farm in Waushara County during the Great Depression, Apps wrote extensively about his childhood and agricultural history. In “Jerry Apps: Home for the Holidays,” he and Apps-Bodilly reminisce about winters and Christmases from growing up on the farm in Wild Rose, Wisconsin, through the 1960s and into the next generations.

“Christmas on the farm, when I was a kid, was one of those things that we looked forward to all year long,” Apps says in the special. “Because that was one of the few celebrations that we really celebrated.”

From picking out a Christmas tree to baking homemade cookies to give away, Apps and Apps-Bodilly recall the rituals that made the holidays memorable.

"I think Christmas traditions, and traditions throughout the year, are important for people because they create memories," says Apps-Bodilly.

"Jerry Apps: Home for the Holidays" depicts the deeper meaning of holiday rituals that bring family and neighbors together, and was produced with the combined resources of PBS Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Join Wade House and PBS Wisconsin at 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5, in Greenbush for a community screening of "Jerry Apps: Home for the Holidays." This partnership event brings together the historic setting of Wade House and the storytelling tradition of PBS Wisconsin to celebrate Wisconsin heritage and the spirit of the season.

Pokorney-Donelan will introduce the film and host a Q&A afterward, sharing insights into its creation and her longtime collaboration with the Apps family.

Prior to the screening, Wade House will host a separate ticketed program with Apps-Bodilly, who will discuss the stories and traditions behind *Old Farm Country Christmas*, the book she and Apps co-authored that inspired the film. The event, scheduled for 1 to 3:30 p.m., will include food samples, crafts, a post-talk Q&A and book signing.

For more information about the screening and book talk, call (920) 526-3271 or visit wadehouse.org.

Funding for "Jerry Apps: Home for the Holidays" is provided by the Wooden Nickel Fund, the Greg & Carol Griffin family, Elizabeth Olson in memory of Modesta Booke Olson, Stanley J. Cottrill Fund, Pat Behling & Ginger Anderle, Alfred H. & June E. Kohlwey Foundation, the Focus Fund for Wisconsin Programs, and Friends of PBS Wisconsin.

PBS Wisconsin and Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR) are services of UW-Madison's Wisconsin Public Media division and the Educational Communications Board. Together, they serve communities statewide through trusted journalism and Wisconsin storytelling, educational resources and lifelong learning, music and cultural programming – on air, online, and in person through live events, freely accessible to all and powered by community support.
pbswisconsin.org

-END-