

American Film Institute Kicks Off 50th Anniversary at AFI Conservatory 2017 Commencement

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

A historic AFI Conservatory Commencement at the TCL Chinese Theatre in Hollywood on Monday, June 5, 2017, marked the 50th Anniversary of the Instituteâ??s formation in 1967, with its honorees â?? the AFI Class of 2017, as well as Honorary Degree recipients Carol Burnett, Marshall Herskovitz (AFI Class of 1975) and Edward Zwick (AFI Class of 1975) â?? spanning the past, present and future of the art form.AFI began its commemoration of its golden milestone, which will unfold through 2019 â?? the 50th Anniversary of the Conservatoryâ??s 1969 inaugural class. Activities and programs during that timeframe will continue AFIâ??s promise to educate todayâ??s audiences and tomorrowâ??s artists.
In celebration of the Anniversary, AFI Founding Director George Stevens, Jr., joined AFI President Emerita Jean Picker Firstenberg and current AFI President and CEO Bob Gazzale â?? bringing together all three presidents from AFIâ??s history. Joining them and the AFI Class of 2017 were Sir Howard Stringer, AFI Board of Trustees Chair, and Robert A. Daly, AFI Board of Directors Chair.

â??Fifty years ago, Gregory Peck and I announced the creation of the American Film Institute, with high aspiration and great hopes,â?• said Stevens. â??Its mission was to advance and elevate the art of film, and one central idea was to create a Center for Advanced Film Studies [known today as the AFI Conservatory], a bridge for young people from learning to make films to becoming professional filmmakers. You, the graduates of 2017, are a fulfillment of that dream.â?•

AFI Class of 2017
AFI Class of 2017

The Commencement honorees â?? including this yearâ??s AFI Conservatory graduates, the worldâ??s newest filmmakers â?? underscored the spirit of the anniversary, as 2017 also marks the 50th birthday of THE CAROL BURNETT SHOW, and Herskovitz and Zwick are both prominent alumni of the Conservatory. A Doctorate of Fine Arts *honoris causa* was conferred upon Burnett by special guest

Kristin Chenoweth, and Doctorates of Communication Arts *honoris causa* were conferred upon Herskovitz and Zwick by Firstenberg. All three Honorary Degree recipients shared words of wisdom with the Class of 2017. Chenoweth sang a refrain from Burnettâ??s trademark closing song, â??Iâ??m So Glad We Had This Time Together.â?•

Burnett began her comments with her trademark â??Tarzan yellâ?• and urged Fellows to â??make great art,â?• while adding, â??Nothing is impossible if you believe hard enough, and you work hard enough.â?•

Herskovitz and Zwick shared anecdotes from their longtime creative collaboration, which began at the AFI Conservatory, and which Herskovitz described as â??an extraordinary partnership â?? and the longest living partnership in Hollywood today.â?•

â??Leaving here you are not alone,â?• said Zwick, stressing the uniquely collaborative nature of the Conservatory program. â??Your classmates will be there to serve as a living reminder of who you are and what you dream of.â?•

AFI Honorary Degree recipients Marshall Herskovitz, Carol Burnett and Edward Zwick
AFI Honorary Degree recipients Marshall Herskovitz, Carol Burnett and Edward Zwick

As heard in remarks throughout the event, the AFI Conservatory program has a deep history of propelling alumni to success and acclaim Ââ?? including, most recently, Patty Jenkins (AFI Class of 2000), whose WONDER WOMAN had the biggest box-office opening for a female director ever.

AFI Class of 2017 representative ByongHoon Jo, a graduating AFI Cinematographer, also spoke at the event.

Burnett, Herskovitz and Zwick join an esteemed group of past Honorary Degree recipients, including Robert Altman, Maya Angelou, Kathryn Bigelow, Mel Brooks, Anne V. Coates, Clint Eastwood, Roger Ebert, Nora Ephron, James Earl Jones, Lawrence Kasdan, Jeffrey Katzenberg, Kathleen Kennedy, Angela Lansbury, John Lasseter, Spike Lee, David Lynch, Helen Mirren, Rita Moreno, Robert Towne, Quentin Tarantino, Cicely Tyson, Haskell Wexler and John Williams.

Pictured above: AFI Board of Directors Chair Robert A. Daly; AFI President & CEO Bob Gazzale; AFI President Emerita Jean Picker Firstenberg; AFI Founding Director George Stevens, Jr.; AFI Board of Trustees Chair Sir Howard Stringer

(Source: blog.afi.com)

Category

1. #AFI

Date Created
June 12, 2017
Author
hollywoodglee