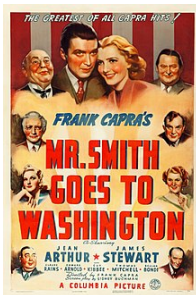


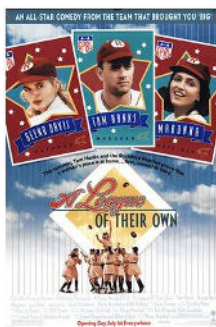


Hollywood: Her Story July 2021 ENewsletter Patriotic Movies

On July 4th, we celebrated Independence Day and the ideals of the founders of the United States of America. For our newsletter this month, we decided to focus on the female filmmakers and stars of the movies that told us patriotic stories about events and people that strove to achieve those ideals – that all men and women are created equal and that they are endowed with the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.



In the 1939 movie *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, Jimmy Stewart played a newly-appointed U.S. Senator who fought corruption, aided by his seasoned and capable secretary, played by **Jean Arthur**. The movie was nominated for eleven Academy Awards, winning the Best Original Story Oscar, and was selected in 1989 for the National Film Registry at the Library of Congress. **Arthur** began her movie career in the silent film era and was named a WAMPAS Baby Star in 1929. She was a major film star during the 1930s and 1940s and her career continued into the decade of the 1950s. Her standard character was a tough working woman who had a heart of gold. **Arthur** was nominated for a 1944 Best Actress Oscar for her work in *The More the Merrier*. Her final movie role was as the homesteader's wife in *Shane*, the only color film in which she appeared and the biggest box office movie of her career.



The 1992 movie *A League of Their Own*, directed by **Penny Marshall**, has a story told by flashback to 1943. **Geena Davis** played the leading role of a woman who was part of the All-American Girls Baseball Professional League. The league was started in 1943 when it appeared that Major League Baseball would stop playing games during World War II. This movie was selected in 2012 for the National Film Registry at the Library of Congress. **Davis** won a Best Supporting Actress Oscar in 1989 for *The Accidental Tourist*. She is a women's rights activist and film producer who established the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, a research-based institution that works to change the image of women and girls in the media.

Marshall directed the movie *Big* in 1988 which was the first film directed by a woman to gross more than \$100 million at the box office. *Big* was nominated for two Oscars – Best Actor and Best Writing, Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen. She directed *Awakenings* in 1990 which was nominated for three Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Actor.



The promise of equality for people of color in the U.S. was denied for centuries by many means including the Jim Crow laws and segregation. In the 2016 movie *Hidden Figures* set in 1961, African-American women mathematicians and engineers contributed to the space program and astronaut John Glenn's successful space flight in significant ways in spite of the overt discrimination that they experienced. **Octavia Spencer** and **Taraji P. Henson** played two of the three "Hidden Figures." **Spencer** won the Best Supporting Actress Oscar in 2012 for *The Help*. She was nominated again for *Hidden Figures*, making her the first African-American actress to be nominated for an Academy Award after already winning one. She was nominated for a third time in 2018 for her role in *The Shape of Water*. **Henson** was nominated in 2009 for the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for her role in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. She has acted in movies for more than two decades. A four-time Oscar-nominated producer, **Donna Gigliotti** won the 1999 Best Picture Oscar for *Shakespeare in Love*. *Hidden Figures*, *The Reader* and *Silver Linings Playbook* are the three additional movies for which she received Oscar nominations, all in the Best Picture category.



The Jim Crow laws and segregation also play prominently in the 2014 movie *Selma* about voting rights marches from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in 1965. The marches were led by Martin Luther King, Jr., Hosea Williams, and John Lewis. The movie was nominated for a Best Picture Oscar and won the Oscar for Best Original Song. **Oprah Winfrey** was part of the cast for the movie as well as producer, for which she received a Best Picture Oscar nomination. Winfrey was nominated for her first Oscar in 1986 for Best Supporting Actress in *The Color Purple*. She has received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award from the Academy. Writer, director and producer **Ava DuVernay** directed *Selma*. She was nominated for a best Documentary Feature Oscar in 2017 for *13th*. When *A Wrinkle in Time* was released in 2018, DuVernay became the first African-American woman to direct a movie with a \$100 million budget.

Women in front of and behind the camera make the movies that we all welcome into our hearts and homes. Women across all the areas of moviemaking from actress to animator, editor to stuntwoman, costume designer to screenwriter, producer to director have contributed to the success of the movie industry since its founding in the 1890s. Help us celebrate these women who are written into movie history in *Hollywood: Her Story*.

Jill S.Tietjen and Barbara Bridges

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