

Hollywood: Her Story December 2021 ENewsletter Christmas Movies

Our December 2019 newsletter featured actresses from two Christmas movie classics: Donna Reed who starred in *It's a Wonderful Life* and Natalie Wood who co-starred at age eight in *Miracle on 34th Street*. This December, we are also featuring Christmas movies. We include women behind the camera as well as those in front of the camera who are profiled in our book *Hollywood: Her Story*.



Lila Finn was the uncredited stunt double for **Donna Reed** in the 1946 movie *It's a Wonderful Life*. An actress, in addition to being a stuntwoman, Finn was an athlete who won a silver medal in volleyball in the 1959 Pan American Games at the age of 50. Her movie career spanned sixty years with more than 100 films, including *Gone with the Wind* in 1939 in which she stunt-doubled for Vivien Leigh. She was the founding president of the Stuntwomen's Association of Motion Pictures and helped found the Screen Actors Guild. Screenwriter **Frances Goodrich** collaborated with her husband Albert Hackett on the screenplay for *It's a Wonderful Life*. Over the course of her career, Goodrich received four Oscar nominations in the category of Best Writing, Adaptation, all shared with her husband. Actress **Gloria Grahame** made her film debut in 1944 and appeared as Violet in *It's a Wonderful Life*. In 1953, she won the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for *The Bad and The Beautiful*.



Maureen O'Hara co-starred in the 1947 movie *Miracle on 34th Street* as the mother of **Natalie Wood's** character. Born in Ireland and known for her red hair, O'Hara appeared in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* earlier in her career. She worked in the industry for thirty years and was nicknamed the "Queen of Technicolor." O'Hara received an Honorary Academy Award in 2014 recognizing "one of Hollywood's brightest stars, whose inspiring performances glowed with passion, warmth and strength."



Barbara Stanwyck starred in the 1945 movie *Christmas in Connecticut*. During her almost forty-year film career, she was nominated for four Best Actress Oscars. In 1982, Stanwyck was honored with an Honorary Academy Award "for superlative creativity and unique contribution to the art of screen acting." Screenwriter **Adele Comandini** wrote the screenplay for *Christmas in Connecticut*. During her thirty-year career in the film industry, Comandini received one Oscar nomination – Best Writing, Original Story for *Three Smart Girls* (1937). In a movie career that spanned thirty years, actress **Joyce Compton** performed in more than 200 films. Her talent was recognized early; in 1926, she was named a WAMPAS Baby Star. Costume designer extraordinaire **Edith Head** designed the gowns for Barbara

Stanwyck in *Christmas in Connecticut*. Winning eight Best Costume Design Oscars and being nominated for twenty-seven more, Head also did the costume design for the 1954 movie *White Christmas*.

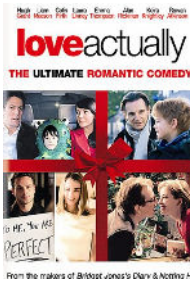
Actress **Diane Ladd** has been in the entertainment industry for almost seventy years and has appeared in more than 120 films. She co-starred in the 1989 movie *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*. Ladd has received three Best Supporting Actress nominations over her long career with the first being in 1975 for *Alice Doesn't Live Her Anymore*. Actress and voice actress **Mae Questel** had a bit role as Aunt Bethany



in *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*. Questel provided the voices for Betty Boop and Olive Oyl starting in 1931. Between 1931 and 1939, she voiced 150 animated shorts for Betty Boop.



Actress **Mary Steenburgen**, who was discovered by Jack Nicholson in the reception room at Paramount Pictures' New York offices, had a supporting role in the 2003 movie *Elf*. She won the 1981 Best Supporting Actress Oscar for *Melvin and Howard* and has appeared in numerous movies and on television.



British actress **Emma Thompson** appeared in the 2003 movie *Love Actually*. She is the only person to have won Academy Awards for both writing and acting. A Dame of the British Empire, Thompson has been nominated for five Oscars and won the 1993 Best Actress Oscar for *Howards End* and the 1996 Best Adapted Screenplay for *Sense and Sensibility*.

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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