

## *Hollywood: Her Story* March 2022 ENewsletter Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award Recipients

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has special awards that it presents, in addition to the Oscars that we are all familiar with for Best Picture, Best Actress, Best Costume Design, and so forth. One of those special awards is the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award which is given to an "individual in the motion picture industry whose humanitarian efforts have brought credit to the industry." Let's learn about the women who have received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award.



**Rosalind Russell** made her screen debut in 1934. Over her career she received four Best Actress Oscar nominations and, in 1973, received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award. Her many charitable activities included providing solace to aging populations, Founder of the League for Crippled Children at the orthopedic hospital in Los Angeles with five years of associated fundraising, and chairmanship of the Lighthouse for the Blind. She worked with the National Arthritis Foundation, Catholic Charities of New York, Children's Services of Connecticut, and aided tornado victims in Kansas. Her World War II activities were legion – she advocated for war bonds and was a founder of the USO in Los Angeles. She was the first actress to entertain in the camps and gave a Christmas party in 1942 for two divisions – a total of 36,000 soldiers. Russell was a constant supporter of the Motion Picture and Television relief fund.



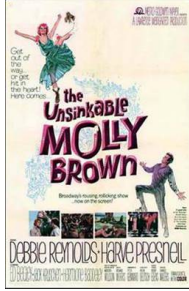
Ranked as the third-greatest female movie star in the Golden Age of Hollywood by the American Film Institute, Belgian-born actress **Audrey Hepburn** won the Best Actress Oscar in 1954 for *Roman Holiday*. She also played the lead role in the 1959 movie *The Nun's Story*, where her character was a nurse in the Belgian Congo, and received a Best Actress Oscar nomination for her performance. Hepburn has been featured on a U.S. postage stamp and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her work as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador. Her posthumous Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award also honored her work as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and her continuing work with UNICEF since the 1950s. Hepburn had been the recipient of international aid as a child after enduring the German occupation of the Netherlands where she and her family were living, and, upon her appointment in 1989, said she was grateful and wanted to give back to the organization. Her work with UNICEF included narrating children's programs in the 1950s retelling stories of the War, visits to an orphanage in Ethiopia, participation in an immunization campaign in Turkey, and visits to many other countries including Venezuela, Ecuador, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Sudan, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Somalia.



Called one of the greatest female screen legends by the American Film Institute, **Elizabeth Taylor** made her screen debut as a child actress in 1942. Her breakthrough role was in 1944 for the movie *National Velvet*. Taylor won her first Best Actress Oscar in 1961 for *BUTterfield 8*. She received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award in 1993 in recognition of her bold commitment to the war on AIDS. She co-founded amfAR and founded The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation. In 2000, Queen Elizabeth II named her a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

**Debbie Reynolds** spent more than five decades in the entertainment business, earning an Oscar nomination in 1965 and Emmy and Tony nominations as well. She received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award in 2016 for her role as a founding member of The Thelians, the charitable organization founded by entertainers in 1955

to promote the awareness and treatment of mental health issues.



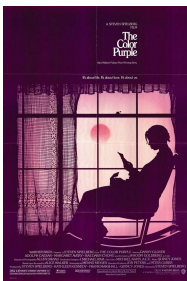
Known as “The Big Mouth,” comedic actress **Martha Raye** had a fifty-year career in the movies, on television, and on the stage. Her 1969 Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award recognized her volunteer efforts and service to the troops. The patriotism she showed in her tours during World War II, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam Conflict earned her the nickname “Colonel Maggie.” During the Vietnam War, she was made an honorary Green Beret because she visited United States Army Special Forces in Vietnam, and she helped out when things got bad in Special Forces A-Camps. In 1993, Martha Raye was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Bill Clinton

for her service to her country. At her request, she was ultimately buried with full military honors in Fort Bragg, North Carolina.



In 1980, after serving as executive story editor at MGM and senior vice president of production at Columbia, **Sherry Lansing** became the first woman president at the helm of a major studio in Hollywood history – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox – at the age of 35. She shared a Best Picture Oscar nomination in 1988 for *Fatal Attraction*. Lansing received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award in 2007 for her work in cancer research, the long list of charitable organizations and

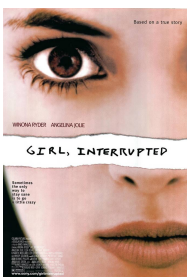
causes she had served, and her long history in serving them. Those organizations included forming the nonprofit organization Stop Cancer and serving on its board. She also served on the board of the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation, founded to honor excellence in basic and clinical science, and as a trustee of the American Association for Cancer Research. She served on the Citizens’ Oversight Committee of the California Institute for Stem Cell Research and the American Red Cross Board of Governors Advisory Committee. She was a trustee of the Carter Center and a University of California regent. The Sherry Lansing Foundation is dedicated to funding and raising awareness for cancer research, health, public education, and encore career opportunities. Lansing has been inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame.



In 1986, media mogul, actress, and producer **Oprah Winfrey** was nominated for her first Oscar in the category of Best Supporting Actress for her work in the movie *The Color Purple*. In 2012, she received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award. Winfrey’s philanthropic efforts include Oprah’s Angel Network, the Oprah Winfrey Foundation, and the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls, which opened in South Africa in 2007.



**Geena Davis** won the 1989 Best Supporting Actress Oscar for *The Accidental Tourist*. She founded the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, a research-based institution that works to change the image of women and girls in media. Davis received the 2020 Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award for her role as an activist in combatting gender inequality aimed at ending gender bias in Hollywood.



**Angelina Jolie** won the 2000 Best Supporting Actress Oscar for *Girl, Interrupted*. In 2014, she received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award for her work with the United Nations on behalf of the forcibly displaced, as well as victims of sexual violence. Jolie became the Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2001. With that title, she visited more than 50 countries. In 2012, she became the organization’s Special Envoy. In her award acceptance speech, Jolie said, “I will do as my mother asked me to do, the best as I can and be of use to others.”

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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