



Hollywood: Her Story September 2022 ENewsletter Young Women and the Oscars

Although we may think that it takes many years to hone one's craft as an actress and thus that most Oscar acting nominees and winners are what we might call "seasoned," it is not only the seasoned actresses that are nominated for and win Oscars. In fact, some are quite young. This month we focus on some of the very young women honored for their acting ability.



From 1934 to 1961, The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences occasionally awarded an Oscar to recognize juvenile performers under the age of eighteen for their "outstanding contribution(s) to screen entertainment." The first recipient of that Special Honorary Award was six-year-old **Shirley Temple** in 1935, recognized for her body of work during 1934. The last young woman was **Hayley Mills** who was 14 years old in 1961 when she was recognized for her work in *Pollyanna*. In between them were **Deanna Durbin**, 17 years old, who was honored for her film work in 1938; **Margaret O'Brien**, eight years old, who was recognized as the outstanding actress for 1944; and **Peggy Ann Garner**, 14 years old, who was recognized for her movie performances in 1945.



The youngest winners of Oscars in the actress categories are Tatum O'Neal, Patty Duke, Anna Paquin and Marlee Matlin. **Tatum O'Neal** is the youngest person to have ever won a competitive Oscar. She was ten years old when she won the 1974 Best Supporting Actress Oscar for her performance in the movie *Paper Moon*. She played opposite her father Ryan O'Neal. **Patty Duke** was sixteen years old when she won the 1963 Best Supporting Actress Oscar for *The Miracle Worker* in which she portrayed Helen Keller. **Anne Bancroft** won the Best Actress Oscar for her role in the movie as Helen Keller's teacher Anne Sullivan. **Anna Paquin** was eleven years old when she took home the 1994 Best Supporting Actress Oscar for *The Piano*. The movie, written and directed by Jane Campion, received eight Oscar nominations and two wins in addition to Paquin's – **Holly Hunter** for Best Actress and **Jane Campion** for Best Screenplay. **Marlee Matlin** has held the record of youngest winner of the Best Actress Oscar since

1987 when she won for her film debut in *Children of a Lesser God* when she was 21 years old. She was the first deaf winner in Oscar history. The movie received four additional Oscar nominations.



Young women who have been nominated for acting Oscars but did not win include Keisha Castle-Hughes and Quvenzhané Wallis, among others. **Keisha Castle-Hughes** became the youngest actress nominated for the Best Actress Oscar in 2004 at the age of 13 when she was nominated for her role in *Whale Rider*. Born in Australia of Māori heritage but now a citizen of New Zealand, Castle-Hughes plays a young Māori girl who aspires to be the chief of her tribe, a role heretofore reserved for men only. **Quvenzhané Wallis** was nominated for the Best Actress Oscar in 2013 for her role in *Beasts of the Southern Wild* when she was nine years old. With that nomination, she took over the title of the youngest person nominated in that category and became the first African American child actor and the first actor born in the 21st century to be nominated for an Oscar. The movie received three additional Oscar nominations.

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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Hollywood: Her Story | 8547 E Arapahoe Road, PMB J189, Greenwood Village, CO 80112

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