

## Hollywood: Her Story January 2024 ENewsletter New Entrants into the National Film Registry

The 25 films selected for the National Film Registry at the Library of Congress in 2023 based on their cultural, historic, and/or aesthetic importance contain some classics including *Home Alone* and *Apollo 13*. The 25 also include films in which women profiled in *Hollywood: Her Story, An Illustrated History of Women and the Movies* played a key part. Let's learn about those.

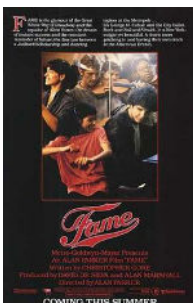


*Dinner at Eight* (1933) involves a dinner party thrown by a socialite couple. There is a back story to each of the people invited to the dinner and among its stars were Marie Dressler and Jean Harlow. Frances Marion shared the screenwriting credit. The movie was based on a Broadway play of the same name. The highest paid screenwriter for two decades, **Frances Marion** made the transition from the silent film era to talkies and earned her first Oscar for *The Big House* in 1931. She won a second Oscar for *The Champ* and received two more Best Screenwriting nominations. The "First Lady" of screenwriting, Marion wrote many of actress **Mary Pickford's** most successful films. She was trained by movie director **Lois Weber** on the craft of making movies. Marion said, "While it's perfectly true that many important men . . . helped and encouraged me, it's consoling to know how many women gave me real aid when I stood at the crossroads. Too many women go

around saying that women in important positions don't help their own sex, but that was never my experience . . . In my case . . . the list is endless, believe me!" A theater performer and silent film actress, **Marie Dressler** began making talking films when she was 59 years old. She won the Best Actress Oscar in 1932 for *Min and Bill*. **Jean Harlow** was a sex symbol as well as an actress. Her first major appearance was in the 1930 movie *Hell's Angels* directed by Howard Hughes. By the mid-1930s, she was one of the biggest movie stars in the U.S. A cocktail is named for her.



*Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision* (1994) is a documentary about architect Maya Lin who designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC and the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama. Director, writer and producer **Freida Lee Mock** won the Best Documentary, Feature Oscar for this movie. In addition, Mock has received four Oscar nominations in the category of Best Documentary, Short Subject for *To Live or Let Die* (1983), *Rose Kennedy: A Life to Remember* (1991), *Never Give Up: The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Odyssey of Herbert Zipper* (1996), and *Sing!* (2002).



*Fame* (1980) follows the life stories of several teenage students who are enrolled in a New York high school for the performing arts. **Irene Cara** acted and sang in the movie and recorded the film's title song "Fame" which became a number one hit in several countries. She shared the 1984 Best Music, Original Song Oscar for the song "Flashdance . . . What a Feeling" from the movie *Flashdance*.

*Desperately Seeking Susan* (1985) tells the story of a New Jersey housewife who becomes mistaken for a free-spirited woman she has read about in the personal columns. It was directed by **Susan Seidelman** who has been active in



the industry as a director, writer, and producer for more than forty years. In 1994, Seidelman was nominated for a Best Short Film, Live Action Oscar for *The Dutch Master*. On her acceptance to the NYU film school, she said, "It was right after a lot of changes, after our battles had been fought for women. So in reaping some of the benefits of the women's movement at that time, I just assumed I could be a director. I never questioned that I couldn't, and as a result I was kind of ignorant. But I also think that ignorance is bliss. I wasn't aware how bad the statistics really were for women." Screenwriter **Leora Barish** wrote the screenplay for the movie. The producer for the movie, **Sarah Pillsbury**, won the 1980 Best Short Film, Live Action Oscar for *Board and Care*.



*12 Years a Slave* (2013), set prior to the Civil War, tells the story of a free Black man, abducted in New York and sold into slavery. **Lupita Nyong'o** won the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for her role in this movie. She has also won an Emmy award and been nominated for a Tony. Nyong'o made her acting debut as a teenager and has been named one of Africa's 50 Most Powerful Women by *Forbes*. Active in the film industry for fifty years, actress **Alfre Woodard** was nominated for Best Supporting Actress in 1984 for *Cross Creek*. She has won Emmys and been nominated for Grammys. A board member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, she has been called one of the Greatest Actors of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. **Dede Gardner** won a Best Picture Oscar for her work on this movie. She was the first female producer to win two Best Picture Oscars, the other was for *Moonlight* (2017), and, has received four other Best Picture nominations as

well. Costume designer **Patricia Norris** has been nominated for six Costume Design Oscars over her more than forty-five year career, including one for this movie. She is the only person to have received Lifetime Achievement Awards from both the Costume Designers Guild and the Art Directors Guild.

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*.

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