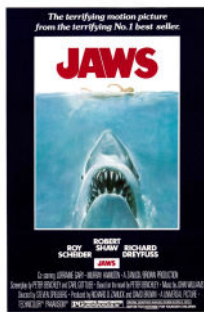


Hollywood: Her Story June 2024 ENewsletter Legacies

In this month's newsletter, we honor the legacies of three women featured in *Hollywood: Her Story, An Illustrated History of Women and the Movies* who have died recently.



Actress and stuntwoman **Susan Backlinie** had the distinction of being the first shark victim in the 1975 movie *Jaws*. She appeared in a number of other movies including *1941* and *The Great Muppet Caper*. A champion swimmer in high school, Backlinie attended college for a year but wanted a more adventurous lifestyle. She worked as a mermaid at Weeki Wachee Springs State Park in Florida and then at various animal attractions. Her scene in *Jaws* took three days to shoot and Steven Spielberg said her stunt was "one of the most dangerous" stunts he had ever directed. Her screams were recorded later in the studio. Backlinie danced a water ballet with Miss Piggy in *The Great Muppet Caper*.



In 1980 producer **Paula Weinstein** became the president of production for United Artists. At age 33, Weinstein was hired by 20th Century Fox in 1978 and promoted to vice president a year later. At that time, The Los Angeles Times said she was "the highest-ranking woman in the motion picture industry." The more than 30 movies that she produced include *The Fabulous Baker Boys*, *Analyze This* and *The Perfect Storm*. She also worked extensively in television. Weinstein was known as a fierce advocate for women in the movie industry. She said, "A man can be mediocre in almost everything, but a woman's got to be perfect."



Editor, cinematographer and director **Jessie Maple** released a feature length film, *Will* in 1981. She was the first African American woman to be admitted to the New York camera operators union after a long legal struggle. She published a book telling that story: *How to Become a Union Camerawoman* (1976). Maple and her husband founded a production company to produce documentaries. With the release of *Will*, Maple was credited with being the first post-civil rights period African American to direct a feature-length film. She produced a second feature-length film and served many years as a news camerawoman. Maple said, "You can't stop progress . . . Some people have asked, aren't you angry that you had to go through all that? And I said no . . . You don't get anything unless you pay a price for it."

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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