



## Hollywood: Her Story May 2025 ENewsletter May Flowers

In the spirit of "April showers bring May flowers," we focus in this month's newsletter on three movies where flowers are prominent in the title: *Cactus Flower*, *Flower Drum Song*, and *Driving Miss Daisy*.



The 1961 movie *Flower Drum Song* received five Oscar nominations including best costume design for **Irene Sharaff**. The movie was selected for preservation by the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress in 2008. Sharaff won her first Oscar in 1951 for *An American in Paris*. Her work in film continued to be recognized through fifteen Oscar nominations from which she took home four more statuettes for *The King and I* (1957), *West Side Story* (1962), *Cleopatra* (1964 – shared), and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1967). Sharaff performed her style miracles across the entire field of the performing arts – theatre, opera, dance, and film. The Theatre Development Fund Irene Sharaff Awards were established in 1993 to honor a member of the costume design community and she received the inaugural award! Subsequent award recipients were expected to embody the qualities of excellence that Sharaff demonstrated: a keen sense of color, a feeling

for material and texture, an eye for shape and form, and a sure command of the craft. Sharaff said, "... you can acquire chic and elegance, but style itself is a rare thing."



The 1969 film *Cactus Flower* was a box office smash – a romantic comedy with non-stop twists and turns involving a dentist, his assistant, and his girlfriend. It netted **Goldie Hawn**, who played the girlfriend, the 1970 Best Actress in a Supporting Role Oscar. An actress and producer, Hawn began producing movies in 1980 and was nominated for the Best Actress Oscar for *Private Benjamin*. **Ingrid Bergman** starred as the dentist's assistant. Her character kept a cactus on her desk – by the end of the movie it had flowered – and so had she. Bergman won three Oscars and was the nominee for four more. Her first win came in 1945 for her performance in *Gaslight*. She is considered to be in the upper echelons of movie talent by the American Film Institute.



The 1989 movie *Driving Miss Daisy* received nine Oscar nominations and won four. One of those Oscars was the Best Actress Oscar for **Jessica Tandy**, who became the oldest woman to win an Oscar. Tandy made her movie debut in 1932 in British films and her Hollywood debut in 1942. She was nominated for Best Supporting Actress for *Fried Green Tomatoes* and won Emmys and Tonys, as well as an Oscar. **Lynn Barber** shared a Best Makeup Oscar for her work on the movie. Barber's career as a makeup artist has spanned five decades. *Driving Miss Daisy* focuses on the interaction between an elderly Jewish woman living in Atlanta, Georgia, and her African American driver.

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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