



Hollywood: Her Story July 2025 ENewsletter A New Oscar Category is Announced - Stunt Design

Since movies began, women have been performing stunts to make the action and storytelling more exciting. They eventually earned the title of Stunt Designer, also called Stunt Coordinator, when they were the ones planning the daredevil acts for themselves or other stunt performers in the movie.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has announced that beginning with films released in 2027, there will be an Oscar awarded for achievement in Stunt Design. The Academy said, "Since the early days of cinema, stunt design has been an integral part of filmmaking. We are proud to honor the innovative work of these technical and creative artists." The Emmys and the Screen Actors Guild Awards already recognize stunt achievement in television and film.

In October 2020, we profiled five stuntwomen in our newsletter: **Jeannie Epper, Bonnie Happy, LaFaye Baker, Leigh Hennessy, and Jennifer Caputo**. In this month's newsletter, we profile stunt designers **Julie Ann Johnson, Dorenda Moore, Betty Thomas Quee, and Melissa Stubbs**, all of whom were stuntwomen before they became stunt coordinators.



A stuntwoman for 45 years and among the highest paid, **Julie Ann Johnson** was one of the first female stunt coordinators. She was a founding member of the Stuntwomen's Association of Motion Pictures and co-founder of the Society of Professional Stuntwomen. She said, "Once a stuntwoman, always a stuntwoman." Said of her, "Julie is one of the bravest women I have ever known, and there is no doubt that her courage and determination have helped make Hollywood a better and safer place to live and work. Today's stuntwomen, and future generations to come, owe her a debt of gratitude."



In 2010, **Dorenda Moore** became the first woman to win the Outstanding Coordination Daytime Emmy. She has more than twenty years of television and feature film experience as a stunt coordinator and stunt performer with more than 200 television and film projects. Moore has served as an officer of the Stuntwomen's Association of Motion Pictures and a Governor of the Television Academy.



Betty Thomas Quee was the first female stunt performer, the first stunt coordinator, and the first female second unit director in Canada. She has been inducted into the Canadian Stunt Hall of Fame. Quee says that when stunt coordinating came along, which evolved later than the stunts themselves, she had an advocate who told her she could coordinate: "Hey, Betty. You could coordinate stunts with your eyes closed. If these guys can do it, YOU can do it." She emphasizes planning for the safety of the stunts saying, "Do it safely but make it look spectacular."

Melissa Stubbs is a stunt coordinator and a second unit director with a specialty in fight choreography. She is a recipient of the Screen Actors Guild Award for



outstanding performance of a stunt ensemble in a motion picture. Stubbs has performed stunt coordination for more than 30 years in film and television.

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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