



Hollywood: Her Story

December 2025 ENewsletter

Movies with Strong Female Leads



The two-part *Wicked* movie series features two strong female leads: **Cynthia Erivo** as Elphaba (the Wicked Witch of the West for those of you who watched the 1939 version of the *Wizard of Oz* movie every year during your childhood) and **Ariana Grande-Butera** as Glinda, the Good Witch. Both women were nominated for Oscars for their roles in the 2024 first installment. Other well-known movies also feature more than one strong female lead. We cover a few of them in this month's newsletter.



Both **Anne Bancroft** and **Shirley MacLaine** were nominated for the Best Actress Oscar for their work in the 1977 movie *The Turning Point*. The movie received 11 Oscar nominations all together. **Bancroft** had won the Best Actress Oscar for her role in the 1962 movie, *The Miracle Worker*, where she portrayed Helen Keller's teacher Anne Sullivan. Over her more than fifty-year career Bancroft won two Tonys and two Emmys and was nominated for three additional Best Actress Oscars. Those nominations include iconic roles in *The Graduate* and *Agnes of God*. **MacLaine** began her more than sixty-year film career in 1955 after appearing in minor roles in Broadway musicals. She had been nominated for five Academy Awards before receiving the Best Actress Oscar for *Terms of Endearment* (1983). MacLaine also has an Emmy and has received the Kennedy Center Honors.



Jane Fonda, **Dolly Parton**, and **Lily Tomlin** starred in the 1980 movie *9 to 5*. **Fonda** won her Best Actress Oscar in 1972 for *Klute* and her second in 1979 for *Coming Home*. She said, "Now that I'm over forty-five, I find it's hard to get interesting roles, so I'm creating my own." Fonda has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. **Parton** received her first Best Music, Original Song Oscar nomination for the song "Nine to Five" from the movie. Her second nomination came in 2006. Parton has won multiple Grammys and has been nominated for an Emmy. **Lily Tomlin** made a name for herself on television through the program *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In*. She then began her film career and was nominated for Best Supporting Actress in 1976 for her role in *Nashville*, her first film performance. She combined a stage, television, and film career that continues today. She has won Emmy and Tony Awards, a Grammy, and the Screen Actors Guild Lifetime Achievement Award.

Geena Davis and **Susan Sarandon** were both nominated for the Best Actress Oscar for their work in the classic 1991 movie *Thelma & Louise*. **Davis** won the 1989 Best Supporting Actress Oscar for *The Accidental Tourist*. She founded the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, a research-based institution that works to change the image of women and girls in media. Davis received the 2020 Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award for her role as an activist in combatting gender inequality aimed at ending gender bias in Hollywood. **Sarandon** has been in the film industry for more than five decades with more than 170 film credits. She won a Best Actress Oscar for *Dead Man Walking* (1996) and was nominated for three more, in addition to *Thelma & Louise*.



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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