



NEWS RELEASE

AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES 2008 HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Caleb Deschanel, Jean Picker Firstenberg and Norman Jewison Honored at AFI Conservatory Commencement

LOS ANGELES, CA, May 21, 2008—American Film Institute (AFI) announced today it will confer honorary degrees on three members of the film community:

Caleb Deschanel

Cinematographer/Director

Doctorate of Fine Arts, *honoris causa*

For contribution of distinction to the art of the moving image

Caleb Deschanel graduated from AFI's first class in 1971 and has gone on to become one of Hollywood's most celebrated cinematographers. His numerous award-winning credits include: *THE BLACK STALLION*, *THE RIGHT STUFF*, *BEING THERE*, *THE NATURAL* and *THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST*.

Jean Picker Firstenberg

AFI President Emerita

Doctorate of Communication Arts, *honoris causa*

For contribution to the mission of the institute

Jean Picker Firstenberg led AFI, America's national cultural arts organization, from 1980-2007—only the second person to head AFI since its creation 40 years ago—making her one of the longest serving chief executives of any nonprofit organization in the US. During Firstenberg's tenure, AFI dramatically expanded beyond its founding missions—to train America's next generation of moviemakers and preserve the nation's film heritage—to also become the largest nonprofit film exhibitor in the US, to mount major national celebrations of excellence in American film and television, and to evaluate and integrate new media in the world of film and television.

Norman Jewison

Director/Producer

Doctorate of Fine Arts, *honoris causa*

For contribution of distinction to the art of the moving image

Norman Jewison's illustrious producing and directing career includes landmark films such as *IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT*, *FIDDLER ON THE ROOF*, *A SOLDIER'S STORY* and *MOONSTRUCK*. His films have received a total of 46 Oscar nominations, and in 1999 he received the Academy's prestigious Irving Thalberg Award. In 1986, Jewison established the Canadian Film Centre, citing AFI as an inspiration.

Previous recipients of AFI Honorary Degrees include Robert Altman, Maya Angelou, Michelangelo Antonioni, Steven Bochco, Ken Burns, Roger Corman, Roger Ebert, Nora Ephron, Chuck Jones, James Earl Jones, Quincy Jones, John Lasseter, Gena Rowlands, Thelma Schoonmaker and John Williams.

The AFI Conservatory offers a two-year accredited MFA program, granting degrees in six filmmaking disciplines—Cinematography, Directing, Editing, Producing, Production Design and Screenwriting. World-renowned for its advanced professional training, AFI's program is designed to nurture the talents and enhance the skills of tomorrow's leading storytellers in the global motion picture and television professions. The curriculum focuses on narrative, visual storytelling through hands-on collaboration, taught by working professionals from the film, television and digital media communities. The AFI Conservatory has trained more than 3,000 artists since its founding in 1969.

About the American Film Institute

AFI is a national institute providing leadership in screen education and the recognition and celebration of excellence in the art of film, television and digital media. Additional information about AFI is available at AFI.com.

###

Contact:Alison Deknatel, AFI, 323.856.7896, adeknatel@AFI.comAmy Kruse, AFI, 323.856.7603, akruse@AFI.comAlexia Haidos, double A public relations, 310.450.6890, alexia@doublea-pr.com