



NEWS RELEASE

CLINT EASTWOOD RECEIVES HONORARY DEGREE FROM THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE

Eastwood first AFI Life Achievement Award Recipient To Also Receive Honor from AFI Conservatory

LOS ANGELES, CA, June 10, 2009—The American Film Institute (AFI) conferred an honorary degree (Doctorate of Fine Arts, *honoris causa*) upon Clint Eastwood for “contribution of distinction to the art of the moving image” during AFI Commencement ceremonies for its 2009 graduating class.

Following the presentation by film historian Richard Schickel on the American Film Institute campus, Eastwood warmly quieted the group by telling them to “Knock it off, will ya?” He then reflected on his early experiences in filmmaking saying, “I never went to a film school because they didn’t have them when I started out. But after doing more than 50 films as an actor and 30 as a director I would have thought I could have graduated before this.”

Eastwood concluded by reminding the graduates that when they find themselves challenged by the difficulties of making their careers as filmmakers never to forget that they are artists and to believe in their talent.

An American master, actor and director, Eastwood has built a legendary body of work in a career that spans more than 60 films and over a half-century.

Born in San Francisco in 1930, Eastwood grew up in Depression-era Northern California. After technical high school, he held jobs as a firefighter, lumberjack and steelworker before serving in the US Army as a swimming instructor during the Korean War. He came to Los Angeles to attend college on the GI Bill, eventually signing as a contract player at Universal.

Eastwood first gained recognition as an actor as boyish cattle driver Rowdy Yates in the popular '60s television series RAWHIDE. He then took a chance on a new, more ambiguous kind of cowboy in his collaboration with director Sergio Leone on a trilogy of spaghetti westerns that helped redefine the western genre. A FISTFUL OF DOLLARS (1964), FOR A FEW DOLLARS MORE (1965) and THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY (1966) made Eastwood a star as the laconic “Man With No Name.”

In the '70s, Eastwood created another iconic screen character—the fiercely independent, rogue cop Harry Callahan in five controversial and crowd-pleasing DIRTY HARRY movies—firmly establishing his quiet persona, spare acting style and totemic macho presence.

Eastwood used his clout as an international star to found his own production company, Malpaso Productions, where he expanded into directing with PLAY MISTY FOR ME (1971). As director, producer, composer and star, he has worked across genres, including westerns, comedies, romances, thrillers and a music biopic, with such diverse films as THE OUTLAW JOSEY WALES (1976), BIRD (1988), THE BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY (1995), MYSTIC RIVER (2003), FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS (2006) and LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA (2006). His UNFORGIVEN (1992) and MILLION DOLLAR BABY (2004) were Academy Award winners for Best Direction and Best Picture. In 2008, Eastwood directed CHANGELING and starred in and directed the highly acclaimed GRAN TORINO.

A virtuoso screen artist who works with the greatest economy of style, Eastwood is one of the great creative talents in American film history. His list of accomplishments is long, including two years in politics as mayor of Carmel-by-the-Sea, California. Among his honors, Eastwood has received the 24th AFI Life Achievement Award, the Kennedy Center Honors and the Irving Thalberg Memorial Award for producing.

Previous recipients of AFI honorary degrees include Robert Altman, Maya Angelou, Michelangelo Antonioni, Steven Bochco, Ken Burns, Roger Corman, Caleb Deschanel, Roger Ebert, Nora Ephron, Jean Picker Firstenberg, Norman Jewison, 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 3,500 artists since its founding in 1969.

PHOTOS

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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.

AFI trains the next generation of filmmakers at its world-renowned Conservatory, preserves

the legacy of America's film heritage through the AFI Catalog of Feature Films, and explores new digital technologies at AFI's Digital Content Lab. For 37 years, the AFI Life Achievement Award has remained the highest honor for a career in film. **AFI 100 Years . . .** series has introduced and reintroduced millions of film lovers to classic American movies. And as the largest nonprofit exhibitor in the United States, AFI's festivals include AFI FEST presented by Audi in Los Angeles, the AFI DALLAS International Film Festival Founding Sponsor Victory Park, Presenting Sponsor NorthPark Center, and AFI-Discovery Channel SILVERDOCS documentary festival in Silver Spring, Maryland, while offering year-round programming at the Arclight Theaters and Skirball Center in Los Angeles, and the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center in the Washington, DC area. Additional information about AFI is available at AFI.com.

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Contact:

John Wildman, AFI, 323.600.3165, jwildman@AFI.com