



NEWS RELEASE

AFI AWARDS 2004 MOMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE ANNOUNCED

Fifth Annual AFI Almanac Names 9 Moments of Significance in Film and TV for the Year

LOS ANGELES, December 20, 2004—The American Film Institute (AFI) today announced the second portion of the **AFI AWARDS 2004** deliberation process—the year's AFI Moments of Significance. These nine noteworthy events were determined to have had an impact on the world of the moving image during the calendar year 2004.

Each year, **AFI AWARDS** adds another volume to the history of American film and television by documenting the collective opinion of the moving image communities, archiving the year's significant moments and honoring the talent and collaborative teams who have created the year's outstanding accomplishments. Ten **AFI Movies of the Year** and 10 **AFI Television Programs of the Year** were announced earlier this week. A complete list of the 2004 official selections and the 2004 juries can be found at: <http://www.AFI.com/tvevents/afiawards04>.

AFI AWARDS 2004 selections were made through AFI's unique 13-person jury process in which scholars, artists, critics and AFI trustees discuss, debate and determine the most outstanding achievements of the year, as well as highlight these significant events that shape our culture. Two AFI juries—one for motion pictures and one for television—convened in Los Angeles for two days of deliberations.

AFI will honor the creative ensembles for each of the honorees at a luncheon sponsored by **Ellen Tracy** on Friday, January 14, 2005, in Los Angeles, California.

CRITERIA

AFI Moments of Significance may include accomplishments of considerable merit; influences with either a positive or negative impression; trends, either new or re-emerging; anniversaries or memorials of special note; and/or movements in new technologies, education, preservation, government or other areas that impact the art of the moving image.

The Moments of Significance selections are listed below:

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AFI MOMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

MOVIES INSPIRE NATIONAL DEBATE

In 2004, *THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST* and *FAHRENHEIT 9/11* reminded the nation of the power of film. Both films transcended the art form, catalyzing a national debate on theology and politics.

Each film was a personal crusade, with Mel Gibson serving as writer/director/producer of *THE PASSION* and Michael Moore serving as writer/director/producer of *FAHRENHEIT*. Both filmmakers tossed Hollywood convention out the window, attracting masses to the movies that would normally not purchase a ticket to an ultra-violent subtitled film or a documentary.

Ultimately, both films shone a bright light on the political and religious polarization in the United States in 2004.

"TARNATION" AND FILM'S AFFORDABLE TOOLS

Jean Cocteau once said, "Film will only become art when its materials are as inexpensive as pencil and paper."

In 2004, the accessibility to affordable tools for the art form was brilliantly dramatized by the Cannes Film Festival's acceptance and enthusiasm for *TARNATION*, a film made for \$218.

Director Jonathan Caouette received standing ovations for his documentary, a self-portrait about growing up with a mentally ill mother. He edited the film from home movies, photographs and other materials on his personal computer.

The direction is not only one for independent filmmakers, as the filmmakers who created Paramount's *SKY CAPTAIN AND THE WORLD OF TOMORROW* used desktop Macintosh computers to create the film's 2000 effects shots.

This movement is encouraging and will further solidify the moving image as the language of the 21st century.

CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF TELEVISION NEWS

2004 saw the final broadcasts of veteran newscasters Tom Brokaw, Barbara Walters and Bill Moyers, the retirement of *60 MINUTES* creator Don Hewitt and the news that Dan Rather would leave his anchor seat in 2005.

The loss of this generation of journalists raises questions about the long-term viability

of evening news broadcasts, which have been suffering from declining ratings for years, due to 24-hour news channels and immediate access to news via the Internet.

It also illustrates a more significant and worrisome trend—the drastic change in how news is packaged and presented via television. Gone are the days when Walter Cronkite read the news with a voice of authoritative integrity. Today’s newscasters are more personalities than journalists, and the landscape has become one of “niche news,” where viewers tune in to hear information that is skewed to a particular political agenda, not a public agenda. Audiences choose a report and reporter that agrees with their point of view, and ultimately, makes them comfortable.

The networks and all news outlets should strive to present many sides of the complex issues in today’s world, and the viewing public should be reminded that part of the responsibility in finding the truth is their own.

FINAL DOMINO FALLS IN VERTICAL INTEGRATION OF FILM AND TV

On May 12, NBC and Universal merged to become NBC Universal, signaling the final stage of vertical re-integration in the entertainment industry.

This trend has proven cyclical, beginning with the Paramount Decree of 1949, which was designed to prevent monopolistic practices in the film community by prohibiting the studios from owning theater chains. Fifty-five years later, 2004 sees a landscape where studios, networks, theater chains, music labels and home video departments are integrated to serve and support each other.

The effects of this culmination will be felt in all areas of the creative community, where “event films” have become necessary to build a bridge between all corporate constituents. The independent film scene continues to flourish in large part because the tools have become more affordable, but what has been lost is the middle ground, where studios support films that can entertain a vast audience with different interests, which is what makes this country so unique.

THE DAILY SHOW WITH JON STEWART

Jon Stewart and the creative team at THE DAILY SHOW have been well awarded for their daily pseudo-news broadcast, but in this year of the presidential election, their impact on the national conversation grew beyond television.

The show’s impact on younger Americans is particularly significant. As it deconstructs the news cycle each night in its humor, THE DAILY SHOW provides a master class in critical analysis, forcing us to question how the news is presented on other channels.

It would be sad to document that one of the best sources of news today is a faux news show, if Jon Stewart and his creative team didn't do it so well.

COMEDY REDEFINED...FOR THE MOMENT

FRASIER, FRIENDS and SEX IN THE CITY all aired their final episodes in 2004. Combined, the three sitcoms gave America 27 seasons of comedy—FRASIER ran for 11 years, FRIENDS for 10 years, and SEX AND THE CITY for six years.

With EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND ending its nine-year run next year, THE SIMPSONS will be the only situation comedy institution left on television.

Comedy has not left the airwaves, though; it thrives in late night television with Jay Leno and David Letterman, on cable in the form of CHAPPELLE'S SHOW and on the networks it has found a new home in less traditional places, like the dark halls of DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES and the courtroom drama BOSTON LEGAL.

TV THINKS OUTSIDE THE BOX

A second wave of convergence has begun to impact the world of television as content is packaged for distribution across multiple platforms.

Of note in 2004:

- The premiere of the pilot for the WB's JACK AND BOBBY aired in its entirety over the Internet before the broadcast premiere.
- The success of television programs on DVD has reshaped the economics of television.
- The market for video games—where players gather around their television sets—exploded in 2004, suggesting a new dimension for television, where the viewer is the star of the program.

For those who wonder if the day is near when consumers will own a Dick Tracy TV watch, the answer is, "Yes" and so much more.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION AS CULTURAL FORCE

The Federal Communications Commission became a programming power in 2004.

The government's voice in what is suitable for the airwaves is not a new concept, but the staggering rate at which the threat of it grew during the year has had a profound

effect on television. Unsure of how the FCC will rule on an issue, the creative community has begun to self-censor their shows, a disturbing trend in a country founded on free expression.

The flashpoint for this moment of significance was in January, during Janet Jackson's and Justin Timberlake's live Super Bowl halftime performance, when Jackson's breast was exposed to a global audience during a sexually explicit dance routine.

In September, the FCC fined 20 TV stations the maximum penalty for indecency and the result has been a chilling effect on all aspects of television—production, advertising and distribution.

As a prime example, on Veterans Day, several ABC affiliates refused to air Steven Spielberg's *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN* in an unedited form for fear they would be fined by the FCC. Most of the stations that pulled the film had aired it unedited to commemorate Veterans Day in 2001 and 2002.

MARLON BRANDO, 1924 - 2004

On July 1, acting legend Marlon Brando passed away at the age of 80.

The art of screen acting has two chapters—"Before Brando" and "After Brando." Though Stanislavski created "method acting," it was Brando who showed the world its power. His raw, hypnotic energy created screen characters that will live forever in the annals of film history:

Stanley Kowalski in *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE* (1951)

Johnny Strabler in *THE WILD ONE* (1953)

Terry Malloy in *ON THE WATERFRONT* (1954)

Sky Masterson in *GUYS AND DOLLS* (1955)

Don Vito Corleone in *THE GODFATHER* (1972)

Paul in *LAST TANGO IN PARIS* (1972)

Colonel Kurtz in *APOCALYPSE NOW* (1979)

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, maintains America's film heritage through the AFI Catalog of Feature Films and explores new digital technologies in entertainment and education through AFI's New Media Ventures. As the largest nonprofit exhibitor in the US, AFI ON SCREEN encompasses the annual AFI FEST presented by Audi: AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival and SILVERDOCS: AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary

Festival, while offering year-round programming at Arclight Hollywood and the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center in Silver Spring, Maryland. AFI AWARDS, the annual almanac for the 21st century, honors the most outstanding motion pictures and television programs of the year, while **AFI's 100 Years . . .** series has ignited extraordinary public interest in classic American movies. And, during the past 32 years, AFI'S LIFE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD has become the highest honor for a career in film. Additional information about AFI is available at AFI.com.

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