LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Guild Lifetime Achievement Awards celebrate the remarkable careers of feature, television, news, and sports directors. Here are some of them creating their unique body of work.

CALLING THE SHOTS: (above) Mike Nichols (left) directs Dustin Hoffman at Los Angeles International Airport for the mood-setting opening sequence of The Graduate (1967). Nichols, who received the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004, wanted to use popular songs instead of a traditional musical score to establish tone. (opposite) Kathleen Gallant is kidnapped by fugitives in Henry King’s revenge Western, The Bravados (1958). King, who received his Lifetime Achievement Award in 1956, was known for literary adaptations. He was a contract director at Fox from 1930-1961.
ON THE ROPES: When 2006 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Clint Eastwood cast Hilary Swank (left) in the boxing drama Million Dollar Baby (2004), he had confidence in her acting, but concerns over her small physique. To prepare her for the role, Eastwood put her through an intense workout regimen. “She was like a feather. But she had this great work ethic.”

HAPPY HOUR: James Burrows (right), recipient of the inaugural Lifetime Achievement in Television Award in 2015, offers closing words of advice to his four leads in the final episode of Will & Grace (1998-2006). From pilot to finale, Burrows directed every episode of the series over eight seasons. “I had a great time on Will & Grace. That’s why I did it. It made me laugh every week.”

ADMAN: Joe Pytka, directing a spot with George Foreman, will be receiving a Lifetime Achievement in Television Award in 2016 for his groundbreaking work in commercials. He has directed more than 5,000 ads, including 80 for the Super Bowl. Many of his commercials have become pop culture touchstones.

MEAN STREETS: 1993 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Sidney Lumet (right) with Treat Williams as a narcotics detective battling police corruption in Prince of the City (1981). On shooting in New York, Lumet said, “When you shoot here, it’s like sitting on a big lid ready to blow sky high. And this energy reaches the screen.”

THE HORROR: 2000 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Steven Spielberg directs Liam Neeson in Schindler’s List (1993) on location in Poland. Spielberg said he waited to direct the film until he felt he had “the craft and emotional information to be able to acquit the Holocaust in an honorable way.”

FOUL PLAY: Macbeth meets feudal Japan in Akira Kurosawa’s Throne of Blood (1957), one of three Shakespearean adaptations he directed. In this scene, Kurosawa rehearses with Isuzu Yamada as the venomous Lady Washizu, the film’s Lady Macbeth. Kurosawa received the Lifetime Achievement Award in 1992.

PHOTOS: (TOP) WARNER BROS./EVERETT; (BOTTOM, LEFT) DGA ARCHIVES; (BOTTOM, RIGHT) PHOTOFEST

PHOTOS: (TOP) CHRIS HASTON/NBCU PHOTO BANK; (BOTTOM, LEFT) UNIVERSAL PICTURES; (BOTTOM, RIGHT) ORION PICTURES/MGM

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SIBERIAN WINTER: David Lean, a 1973 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, commands an army of extras as they march through a desolate Russian winter in Doctor Zhivago (1965). Although set in the former Soviet Union, much of the film was shot in Spain during the summer. To simulate winter, Lean used marble dust and plastic snow.

TOUGH GUY: 1998 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Francis Ford Coppola, working with Marlon Brando, sets up one of many scenes around the dining room table in The Godfather (1972). To appease Paramount, Coppola incited Brando into doing a screen test by pretending he was doing a sample take to test the equipment.

HIGH SOCIETY: George Cukor and Katharine Hepburn work on a scene for The Philadelphia Story (1940), shot in eight weeks without any retakes. Hepburn later admitted that she based part of her character’s physical mannerisms on the director himself. Cukor received the Lifetime Achievement Award in 1981.

NO WAY OUT: Elia Kazan (left), who received the Lifetime Achievement Award in 1987, goes for the emotion of a scene with Karl Malden and Vivien Leigh in A Streetcar Named Desire (1951). To heighten the sense of Blanche’s swelling claustrophobia, Kazan had her apartment set physically shrink as the film progressed.
CORNERMAN: Martin Scorsese, a Lifetime Achievement honoree in 2003, directs Robert De Niro in *Raging Bull* (1980). To prepare for the film, Scorsese attended a number of boxing matches and was struck by the sight of blood dripping off the ropes, which he duplicated in the film.

FRAMED: Robert Butler, inaugural recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award in TV in 2015, directed such landmark pilots as *Hill Street Blues*, *Star Trek*, and *Moonlighting*. “My effort was to bring life, clarity, and the recognition of truthful behavior so audiences could be touched and transported by these shows.”

TOUCHDOWN: Edward T. “Ted” Nathanson, who received the first Lifetime Achievement Award in Sports in 1991, helped bring pro football into the living room and make it America’s sport. He baffled competition by setting up a large monitor in the truck and zooming in for close-ups that looked like exclusives.

NOSE FOR NEWS: During his long tenure at ABC, Roger Goodman spearheaded technological advances including the over-the-shoulder graphics box, and the first live transmission from a nuclear submarine. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award in News Directing in 2010.

PUNCHY: A pioneer who helped create the narrative film in America, John Ford was also one of the founders of the Directors Guild. Best known for his Westerns, he went to West Point for the true-life story of a salt-of-the-earth Irish immigrant in *The Long Gray Line* (1955). He received a Lifetime Achievement Award in 1954.

MIND GAMES: 2013 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Miloš Forman (right) stages a brawl between R.P. McMurphy (Jack Nicholson) and a hospital aide in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (1975). Many of the actors, including the ones who were actual mental patients, stayed in character even when the cameras weren’t rolling.
PIONEER: The world’s first female director, Alice Guy-Blaché (left), sets a scene from The Great Adventure (1918). She received a special posthumous award for lifetime achievement from the Guild in 2011 to “raise awareness of an exceptional director and bring greater recognition to the role of women in film history.”

TEA TIME: 1966 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient William Wyler works with Bette Davis (right) and Teresa Wright on the turn-of-the-century melodrama The Little Foxes (1941). Wyler found the original stage play captivating. He equated the plight of the main character to that of being a film director.

PASSION PLAY: Frank Borzage (center) moves in for a close-up on Gary Cooper and Marlene Dietrich in Desire (1936). Borzage, who was known as Hollywood’s most romantic director, collaborated with producer Ernst Lubitsch to add farce to the melodrama. Borzage received the Lifetime Achievement Award in 1961.