

The Academy Honors Lina Wertmüller

Roberta Cutillo (October 30, 2019)



Italian director Lina Wertmüller, the first woman to receive an Academy Award nomination for Directing for her 1975 film “Seven Beauties,” received an Honorary Academy Award for her extraordinary career at the star-studded 11th annual Governors Awards, an unmissable campaign stop for almost every Oscar contender. Other awards went out to director David Lynch, actor Wes Studi and actress and gender-parity activist Geena Davis.

Launched in 2009, the [Governors Awards](#) [2] quickly became the unmissable campaign stop for almost every Oscar contender, making this yearly appointment one of the most star-studded events of the year. But it was the 91-year-old Italian director Lina Wertmüller who stole the show last Sunday.

Wertmüller was awarded an Honorary Academy Award for the provocative, groundbreaking films she

directed throughout her outstanding career, including “The Basiliks,” “The Seduction of Mimi,” “Love and Anarchy” and “Swept Away.” In 1976, she became the first woman to be nominated for Best Director for her film “Seven Beauties,” which also earned her a nomination for Best Original Screenplay.

[Sophia Loren](#) [3] was the first to introduce Wertmüller, followed by Greta Gerwig and Jane Campion — two of the four women nominated for Best Director since Wertmüller — who gave their own tributes. The nonagenarian - who spoke through her translator, none other than the acclaimed Italian actress [Isabella Rossellini](#) [4] - then charmed the audience with her hilariously poignant remarks.

She ended her speech by criticizing the fact that the Oscar is male and calling for the creation of a new female version of the award, “Anna.”

In the wake of #OscarsSoWhite and the MeToo movement, the Academy has been trying to be more racially and ethnically diverse, more balanced between men and women, more international in makeup and more daring in its choices. And this year’s Governors Awards strived to do just that.

In fact, the other recipients of the award included actor [Wes Studi](#) [5], who became the first ever Native American to receive an Academy Award, and actress and activist [Geena Davis](#) [6] who won the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award as a recognition of her in-depth research into the gender biases in media, and her crusade to repair those biases. The other Lifetime Achievement award winner was [David Lynch](#) [7], a white man yes, but whose work does indeed make up some of the most daring and downright bizarre moments in the film history of the last decades.

All of Hollywood’s top celebrities were in attendance, representing this year’s top Oscar contending films, including, among others, Quentin Tarantino, Leonardo DiCaprio and Brad Pitt (“Once Upon a Time in Hollywood”), Robert Pattinson and Willem Dafoe (“The Lighthouse”), Greta Gerwig, Saoirse Ronan and Florence Pugh (“Little Women”), Noah Baumbach, Adam Driver and Scarlett Johansson (“Marriage Story”), and even Korean Director Bong Joon Ho representing his acclaimed new film “Parasite.”

All of this served to create quite a bit of anticipation for next year’s Academy Awards, which hopefully will be both more exciting and more inclusive than the past few editions have been.

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