

Culver Historical Highlights

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"... And the Award Goes to ..."

Roger L. Mayer Receives First "Heart of Screenland Star" Award at Gala Premiere

STARS TURN OUT FOR FIRST "STAR" AWARD & FILM PREMIERE

Following the spotlight which lit the skies to the Veterans Memorial Building on Friday evening, September 24th, celebrities and local citizens alike shared an evening of warm reminiscences and the excitement of a gala film premiere and a poignant award ceremony.

The Gala Premiere Benefit was indeed gala with the inaugural presentation of the "Heart of Screenland Star" Award and the world premiere of "Visions of Grandeur," Part I of the four-part documentary, *Culver City: The Reel Hollywood*.

With stars Donald O'Connor, Ann Miller, Marsha Hunt, Turhan Bey, Audrey Totter and Marie Windsor attending along with Honorary Committee Co-Chairs, Culver City Mayor Richard A. Marcus and legendary film director George Sidney - who came in from Las Vegas with his lovely wife, Corinne - the evening was undeniably a star-studded event.

Recalling personal memories of the Golden Era, Sidney regaled the audience with tales of filmmaking, underscoring the incredible film history of our town. "It's a story that needs to be told and this wonderful first episode is a great beginning," said Sidney.

These sentiments were echoed by "Star" Award Honoree, Roger L. Mayer, President and COO of Turner Entertainment Co., whose impassioned acceptance remarks demonstrated why he was the Society's clear choice as the first recipient of the "Heart of Screenland Star" Award. Having lived, worked and "fought" in Culver City for many years, Mayer expressed his sincere respect and appreciation for a city "that takes great pride in preserving its past."

(Cont'd on page 3)



Roger L. Mayer with first
"Heart of Screenland Star" award



Mayor Richard Marcus addresses
star-studded audience

LILLIAN CULVER DIES AT 103

by Ross Hawkins

Just one day before the world premiere of the Culver City Historical Society's production of "Visions of Grandeur," Lillian Culver, widow of City founder Harry Culver, died peacefully at the age of 103.

She was born Lillian Roberts and lived in both Santa Monica and Culver City as a young girl. Later, after becoming an actress in her teens, she appeared in films for pioneer producer Thomas Ince, co-



starring as Mary Pickford's chum, "Emma," in the film *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*.

Ms. Culver retired from films after marrying in 1916, but had her own radio talkshow in the 1930s, titled "Smart Women." Three radio stations in Southern California carried the show and one of the announcers on the program was John Conte, brother of actor Richard Conte. Daughter Pat Culver Battle recalled her mother doing radio commercials in the 1930s during the Depression for the Pacific Military Academy which was founded by her father.

(Cont'd on page 2)

October 27th General Membership Meeting: ELECTIONS !

The Historical Society's General Membership Meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 27th at 7:00 pm in the Lethbridge Garden Room at the Veterans Building, 4117 Overland Avenue.

This is "Election Night" to choose the Society's next slate of officers and we ask the entire membership to come out to support and vote for the future Board who will lead us into the new millennium.

The evening will also feature special guest Rodney Gotlieb who will display and discuss the famed Parrish Collection of still photos from Hollywood's golden age.

Refreshments will be served. For more information, please call Ross Hawkins at (310) 839-5725.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Lu Herrera



Friday night, September 24, 1999 will live in the annals of the Historical Society as a luminous memory in the City's history. It was our honor to name Roger L. Mayer the first recipient of the Society's "Heart of Screenland Star" Award for his contributions to preserving the City's film heritage. All who attended were sincerely moved by Roger's acceptance speech and his heartfelt appreciation for Culver City, the preservation efforts of the Society, and the quality and value of "Visions of Grandeur," Part I of *Culver City: The Reel*

Hollywood.

I have known Roger for many years and, like everyone else who participated in this special evening, I was overwhelmed at the turnout of stars and the warm ambience of the entire affair. My deepest thanks to all involved in helping to create this history-making event!

And regarding our upcoming elections, I'm happy to give the following report from the 1999 Nominating Committee:

The Nominating Committee was called to order by Parliamentarian, Edna Larkin, on Tuesday, September 28 and offered the following slate of officers for a two-year term beginning January, 2000; all have agreed to serve:

President: Don Rogers; 1st Vice President: Cathy Zermeno; 2nd Vice President: Sandy Burton; 3rd Vice President: Reba Yudess; Secretary: Ken Ruben; and Treasurer: Virgie Eskridge. The new president will appoint the parliamentarian and committee chairs. Respectfully submitted, 1999 Nominating Committee (Susan Berg, Julie Lugo Cerra and Cathy Zermeno).

I strongly urge you all to come out on Wednesday, October 27th and support Your Historical Society.

Lu Herrera

Notes from Your City Historian

by Julie Lugo Cerra



The "Heart of Screenland Star" Award event was a wonderful nostalgic trip back to the glory days. In Culver City, in "the olden days," the major employers were the studios, Helms Bakeries and Hughes Aircraft. In just my family alone, my grandfather, Aunt Jean, Uncle George, cousin Georgie and I have all worked for the industry at one time or another. In my husband Sam's family, his father, sister, brother, sister-in-law and uncles worked for the studios.

The San Gennaro repast was delightful, and the floral decor was a tribute to movie industry florists, the Eskridges (Culver Center Flowers) who also provided a "silver-dusted" boutonniere and a corsage for honoree Roger Mayer and his wife Pauline. Stu Freeman, Judy Stangler (Event Chair), Ross Hawkins, Sandy Burton and Karen Coyle worked hard to pull this off and they deserve congratulations.

This event and the *Wizard of Oz* fundraiser are proof that many of us really enjoy celebrating our local history and there is cause to get together more often. It is a tribute to our able president, Lu Herrera, that we are back on track, fundraising for a needed museum.

And in honor of Mr. Mayer, I have put together the special Film Timeline insert which should bring back many memories.....

(CULVER cont'd.)

After Harry Culver's death in 1946, Ms. Culver returned to work on the stage and in films, appearing in the film, *Life With Mother* with Billie Burke and in the stage production of "Harvey."

She worked at MGM in *The Band Wagon* with Fred Astaire, *Dream Wife* with Cary Grant and Walter Pidgeon, and *Carbine Williams* with Jimmy Stewart and Jean Hagen. For Columbia Pictures, she appeared in Humphrey Bogart's last picture, *The Harder They Fall*.

Ms. Culver also appeared on countless television shows. One of her favorite reoccurring roles was that of "Mrs. Schooner" on "Dennis the Menace." In addition to her daughter, Ms. Culver is survived by grandsons, Dr. John Battle, Pastor of Presbyterian Church in Tacoma, WA and Christopher Wilde, an administrator in Washington state's Health and Human Services Dept., and four great-grandchildren, Rebekah, Robert, Amy and Eva Battle.

Her daughter Pat stated that her mother had a long and full life: "We had a wonderful time together. It was fun to have known her."



Lillian Culver, later in life

Culver Historical Highlights

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The Culver City Historical Society, founded in 1980, is a non-profit membership organization created for the purpose of collecting, preserving and exhibiting the history of Culver City and its cultural and civic accomplishments.

The CCHS Newsletter is published quarterly.

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Editor.....Judy Stangler
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Carolyn Cole, Ross Hawkins, Lupe Smith
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Cathy Zermeno.....2nd VP, Museum
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EDITOR'S BOX

For those of you who missed the "Heart of Screenland Star" Award Gala Premiere Benefit - and you truly missed an incredible event - we've tried to capture in this Fall issue some of the spirit and excitement experienced by all who attended. The warm rapport, happy conversations and easy mixing of all the guests made this really a night to remember and set the bar for future "Heart of Screenland Star" Award presentations.

With the year 2000 just around the corner, the upcoming election is especially important as the Society moves into the new millennium. Next year will see the Society's 20th Anniversary and the real possibility of the Culver City Heritage Museum becoming a reality, so many exciting developments are in our future. You are urged to attend the General Membership Meeting on Wednesday, October 27th and make your voice heard. Remember, it is YOUR Historical Society.

CCHS Looking for Help

Do you have or know people who have film and memorabilia treasures which may be sitting in their garages or attics? The CCHS and "Reel Life in Culver City" are searching for film footage and background documents for this extraordinary film history. Please contact Ross Hawkins for more information or leads at (310) 839-5725.

REEL LIFE IN CULVER CITY

by Ross Hawkins



RODNEY GOTLIEB AND THE PARRISH COLLECTION

When he was in high school, Rodney Gotlieb wanted to have an old photograph of his grandparents retouched to give to his father as a surprise gift. He found that the process was too expensive for his teenage budget. Already a talented artist and painter, Gotlieb thought this might be a good career to get into.

After graduating from Hamilton High School, he started looking for a school that would train artists to restore and retouch old photos, but found there weren't any. He finally met a woman who had her own studio and convinced her to let him train with her, spending the next two years learning how to airbrush headshots of actors and actresses. "In the old days, they used to retouch the negatives! It was all right to remove acne scars, but you couldn't totally remove bags and circles around the eyes."

Gotlieb met oldtime cameraman Bill



"GWTW" (L-R): David O. Selznick, Sidney Howard, Clark Gable, Victor Fleming
©1981 The Fred A Parrish Collection

Tomkin who had put in a lot of time at MGM, and later worked on the popular TV series, "Highway to Heaven." Tomkin had inherited the extraordinary collection of still photos from famed photographer, Fred Parrish.

Parrish worked on such classic films as *Gone With The Wind*, *A Star is Born* and *The Prisoner of Zenda*. During the filming of GWTW, Parrish had carried an extra camera, taking hundreds of behind-the-scenes photos of the stars, crew and film production, continuing this practice on other films.

In 1989, Gotlieb was asked to retouch and restore 25 of these candid photos for the Atlanta premiere of the 50th Anniversary screening of GWTW, and in 1990, the Atlanta Center Historical Museum added 25 more and displayed all 50 photos for the next three years.

At the upcoming General Membership Meeting, Rodney Gotlieb will display some of these rare photos and share secrets of how motion picture stars and top models retain their "youthful glow."

An added treat will be the screening of interviews conducted at the 60th Anniversary premiere of GWTW held at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. These interviews will be part of "The Industrial Age of the Movies," Part II of *Culver City: The Reel Hollywood*.

(PREMIERE cont'd.)

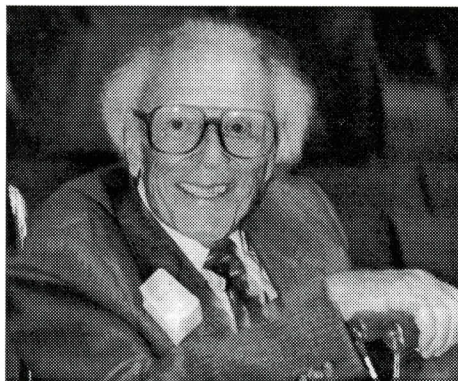
Mayer's dedication to the field of film preservation is widely known, and Honorary Committee Members, Richard P. May, Vice President of Preservation for Warner Brothers, and Robert Rosen, Dean of UCLA's Department of Theater, Film and Television, were on hand to pay respects to their esteemed colleague. And boss Ted Turner sent a wry video message of congratulations as he regretted not being able to attend.

While much more can be said of this extraordinary evening, limitations of space begs to include more photos than words.....

[Note: "Premiere" photos by George Themelis, Culver City News.]



Donald O'Connor and Ann Miller
(photo by Jerry Anker)



Director George Sidney



(L-R) June Caldwell of Turner Ent. Co. with Janet Marcus & Mayor Richard Marcus

THANK YOU !

For their assistance, support, energy and tireless effort in making the "Heart of Screenland Star" Award Gala Premiere Benefit Premiere the huge success it was, the Board of the Culver City Historical Society extends its deepest thanks to:

HONORARY COMMITTEE: Co-Chairs: Richard A. Marcus & George Sidney, Pat Culver Battle, Robert Daly, Stanley Donen, Kathryn Grayson, Dustin Hoffman, Howard Keel, Syd Kronenthal, Martin Landau, Leonard Maltin, Richard P. May, Ann Miller, Margaret O'Brien, Donald O'Connor, Jane Powell, Robert Rehme, Debbie Reynolds, Mickey Rooney, Robert Rosen, Martin Scorsese, Ted Turner, Jack Valenti, Albert Vera, Michael Wayne, Esther Williams;

PREMIERE COMMITTEE: June Caldwell, Marvin Paige, Marc Wanamaker, Rosemary Chiaverini and UCLA International Studies & Overseas Programs, Karen Coyle, Stu Freeman, Ross Hawkins and Event Chair, Judy Stangler;

AND..... Linda Anderson, Audio Visual West, Lee Bixler, Byco, Inc., Sandy Burton, Carr's Trophies & Engraving, Cavanaugh Reality, Julie Lugo Cerra, Eric Chavkin, Carolyn Cole, Gordon & Janet Cunningham, Culver Carpet Co., Damian Gerard Curran, Nicole Curran, Gloria De Haven, Adam Eskridge, Brian Eskridge, Virgie & Earl Eskridge (Culver Center Flowers), The Exchange Club, Nanette Fabray, Craig Ferré, Ron Fields, Betty Garrett, Burt Gold (Gold Printing), Steve Hadland, Jay Handal (San Gennaro), Brian Hawkins, Lu Herrera, Alison Hill, Marsha Hunt, International Documentary Association, Randi Joseph, Dr. Michael D. Landau, Bob Lench, Ed Little Auto Service, Melissa Landini, Miriam Mack, Vivian & Matt Matheson, "Max," Jackie McCandless, Miller Toyota & Honda, Mark Morris, Virginia O'Brien, Jennifer W. Pietro, Playa Vista, Raintree Cleaners, Richards Furniture, John Riordan Plumbing, Pam Robinson, Don Rogers, Steve Rose, Ann Rutherford, Martha Singer, John Singer, Lupe Smith, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Stellar Hardware, Martha & Woody Tolkien, Marcia Torrey-Jay, Audrey Totter, Efreem & Beverly Violin, Warner Brothers, The Wellness Spa, Marie Windsor, Mark Winogrand, The Wasserman Foundation, Xenotech Strong, Inc. and Cathy Zermeno.

Become a member of the Culver City Historical Society Today!

Join others in preserving the history of the "Heart of Screenland" and the efforts to create the Culver City Heritage Museum. ***We can't do it without you!***

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
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Please make checks payable to **The Culver City Historical Society** and mail to P.O. Box 3428, Culver City, CA 90231-3428. For further information, call (310) 838-1073.

Name/Company: _____

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Contributions of both historic and social significance as well as monetary donations are encouraged, and the CCHS IRS tax exempt status may make such contributions tax deductible.

Culver City Historical Society

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