

Lifestyle

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2019



Members of the Indian Sikh 'Nihang', the traditional Sikh army, ride horses while standing on their backs during a Fateh Divas celebration that takes place the day after the Diwali festival, in Amritsar. — AFP photos

'The Annas?': Oscar honorees target gender equality



US actress Geena Davis accepts the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian award.



US actor Wes Studi accepts his honorary award.



Actress Q'orianka Kilcher speaks onstage.

Hollywood's female filmmakers set out plans to achieve gender equality Sunday as actress Geena Davis and director Lina Wertmuller collected honorary Oscars at a star-studded ceremony focused on diversity. "Thelma and Louise" star Davis told the annual Governors' Awards in Los Angeles how the feminist road movie had prompted her lifelong campaign for gender balance at the movies. "It made me realize in a very powerful way how few opportunities we give women to come out of a movie feeling excited and empowered by female characters," said Davis of "Thelma and Louise."

Davis, already an Academy Award winner, received the special statuette for her work to highlight the lack of women in films. She founded an institute compiling data on gender bias in 2004. She called on filmmakers to immediately go back to their ongoing projects and "cross out a bunch of names of ensemble characters and supporting characters and make them female." Director and actress Olivia Wilde said Davis "was ahead of the #TimesUp conversation by about 20 years."

"She really bangs the drum on this issue... She's the real deal," Wilde told AFP. Wertmuller, 91, finally received an honorary Oscar more than four decades after she became the first woman nominated for best director. She collected

the statuette flanked by fellow Italian screen legends Sophia Loren and Isabella Rossellini, who translated Wertmuller's call for the award to be given a new, more feminine name. "She would like to call it 'Anna.' Women in the room, please scream, 'We want Anna, a female Oscar!'" said Rossellini. The origin of the nickname "Oscar" is unclear, but is thought to derive from the statuette's likeness to a male relative of an early Academy member.

'About time'

Stars at the glitzy ceremony in Hollywood's Ray Dolby Ballroom included Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hanks, Quentin Tarantino, Eddie Murphy, Scarlett Johansson and Jennifer Lopez. "Last of the Mohicans" star Wes Studi became the first Native American actor to receive an Oscar. "I'd simply like to say — it's about time," said Studi, to a raucous ovation. "It's been a wild and wonderful ride," he added. Studi was introduced by Joy Harjo, the first Native American US poet laureate, and actor Christian Bale, who called it a "long overdue moment."

"Too few opportunities in film, on both sides of the camera, have gone to native or indigenous artists — we are a room full of people who can change that," said Bale, who starred with Studi in 2017's "Hostiles." The

#OscarsSoWhite protests surrounding the 2016 Oscars drew attention to the awards' diversity issues.

Studi's award comes almost half a century after Marlon Brando declined his best actor Oscar for "The Godfather" in protest at the movie industry's treatment of Native Americans. Canadian indigenous musician Buffy Sainte-Marie shared a best original song Oscar in 1982. The night kicked off with an honorary Oscar for David Lynch, the surrealist auteur who has been nominated three times for best director but never won.

Regarded as one of the greatest American filmmakers of his generation, Lynch is the enigmatic director of cult classics such as "Blue Velvet" and "Mulholland Drive," as well as television's "Twin Peaks." He was introduced by Laura Dern and Kyle MacLachlan, who have both acted in several of his films. The pair paid tribute to Lynch as a "modern Renaissance man." "David is a man who dares to invent and to create and challenge himself, every single day," said Dern. The honorary Oscars are handed out every year to honor lifetime achievement, and were spun off into a separate event in 2009 to declutter the main show's packed schedule. — AFP



Italian director Lina Wertmuller accepts her honorary award onstage at the 11th Annual Governors Awards gala hosted by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences at the Dolby Theater in Hollywood.



Director David Lynch accepts his Honorary Award. — AFP photos