

# Mel Brooks earns honorary Oscar at 97

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**Online Desk:** A 97-year-old Mel Brooks accepted a lifetime achievement Oscar in Hollywood on Tuesday, more than half a century after he won his only Academy Award with “The Producers.”

At a black-tie gala, Brooks — who memorably sent up Adolf Hitler in seminal satire “The Producers,” as well as exposing racial bigotry in films like “Blazing Saddles” — joked that he felt bad about the fate of his previous Oscar for best original screenplay.

“I miss it so much. I never should have sold it,” he said, to raucous laughter in the ballroom.

“I won’t sell this one, I swear to God!” Brooks added.

The legendary US comic and filmmaker is already one of the select few entertainers to win an Oscar, Emmy, Tony, and Grammy — collectively called an “EGOT” — across a career spanning eight decades.

His latest honor came at the Governors Awards, hosted by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which each year honors four beloved industry veterans, many of whom are felt to have not received their dues at the regular Oscars.

Angela Bassett, who was Oscar-nominated for playing Tina Turner in “What’s Love Got to Do With It” and Queen Ramonda in 2022 superhero sequel “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever,” without winning either, was also honored Tuesday.

Noting that she was only the second Black actress to earn an honorary Oscar, after Cicely Tyson, Bassett paid tribute to other Black female Hollywood pioneers such as Hattie McDaniel, who won an Oscar for “Gone with the Wind” in 1940.

It would be another half-century until McDaniel was followed by Whoopi Goldberg.

“My prayer is that we leave this industry more enriched, forward-thinking and inclusive than we found it,” said Bassett.

“A future where there won’t be a ‘first’, or an ‘only’, or suspense around whether ‘history will be made’ with a nomination or a win.”

– ‘Voting’ –

As well as reflecting on stellar careers, the Governors Awards represent a key chance for this year’s Oscars hopefuls to schmooze and network with Academy voters on behalf of their latest films.

Attendees included Christopher Nolan, Cillian Murphy, Robert Downey Jr and Florence Pugh on behalf of “Oppenheimer,” and Greta Gerwig and Margot Robbie for “Barbie.”

Emma Stone — fresh from her Golden Globes win for “Poor Things” — also attended, as did Paul Giamatti from “The Holdovers,” and Leonardo DiCaprio and Martin Scorsese on behalf of “Killers of the Flower Moon.”

“It’s award season. There’s a lot of emotion and expectation in the air. Some of you are probably even aware that voting ends in seven days,” joked the night’s host, comedian John Mulaney.

This year's Governors Awards were delayed due to the Hollywood actors' strike, which prevented stars from working or promoting their movies for months, before a deal with studios was clinched in November.

The night's other honorees were "E.T." editor Carol Littleton, and Michelle Satter, founding senior director of the Sundance Institute's Artist Programs, which have helped foster the early careers of filmmakers from

Quentin

Tarantino to "Everything Everywhere All At Once" directors Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert.

The 96th Academy Awards will take place on March 10.