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TV show producer Thea Flaum and multi-talented Bonnie Hunt to receive WIF/C Focus Awards



WIF/C honoree Bonnie Hunt

Indefatigable television producer Thea Flaum and multi-talented Chicago native Bonnie Hunt will be honored at Women in Film/Chicago's Focus Awards at a luncheon at the Ritz Carlton Hotel Oct. 10.

Amy Jacobson, Ch. 5 News anchor, will host the awards presentation before an expected crowd of at least 250.

Thea Flaum was executive producer at Ch. 11 when she teamed rival newspaper film critics Roger Ebert and Gene Siskel in the first TV movie review show. Leaving Ch. 11 in 1984, she founded Thea Flaum Productions, producing a continuing flow of TV shows. Her latest series is "Junky to Funky" on HGTV.

Flaum has a massive collection of awards, including nine Emmys, 10 international film awards, a Cine Golden Eagle and a Golden Apple. She recently served as vice president of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

The ever-effervescent, multi-talented Bonnie Hunt, writer, producer, director and actress, started her movie career in 1988 with a role in "Rain Man." Her most recent movie is "Cheaper by the Dozen."

She directed "Return to Me" in 2000 based on a story she wrote and filmed it in the North Side neighborhood where her family lives.

Hunt is currently involved in what will be a third TV series, as yet untitled, in which she plays the title character. This time she is executive producer, and will write, direct and act. "Life of Bonnie" ran in 2002-03, for which she received a Golden Globe Best Actress in a TV series, and "Bonnie" was a 1995 series.

The Focus award acknowledges the contributions of women in film/TV, advertising and corporate who have a tie to Chicago and the Midwest.

Past recipients include broadcast journalist Carol Marin, Second City creative director Joyce Sloan, Original Screen magazine founder Ruth L Ratny and Oscar-winning actress Kathy Bates.

WIF/Chicago revived in late 2004

Non-profit Women in Film/Chicago was founded in the early 1980s following its establishment in Los Angeles and was instantly embraced locally. It flourished until the early '90s when it fizzled out for a number of reasons: women had been accepted equally, they moved to Hollywood, or dropped out of the industry entirely as local opportunities diminished.

The current chapter was revived in late 2004 by Bridges Media Group VP/sales Jennifer Polk and new business director Danielle Ostrowski, who felt that the time was ripe for the renaissance of a once valuable and vibrant Chicago film organization as a new generation of women was opting for visual media careers.

Goals are to provide and promote at all levels in the media creation industry through mentorship programs, networking events, career development opportunities and community resources.

Membership fees are Associate, \$50; General, \$100 and Professional, \$250.

To purchase tickets, Email focus@wifchicago.org. See www.wifchicago.org. Also see Jan. 28, 2005 story in ReelChicago Archives.