

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **“First Lady of Cinema” Honored on Stamp**

*Katharine Hepburn is 16th Inductee into Legends of Hollywood Series*

**OLD SAYBROOK, CT** — The U.S. Postal Service immortalized one of America’s true cinematic treasures — the only recipient of four Academy Awards for Best Actress — on what would have been her 103rd birthday, May 12. The stamp issued today pays tribute to Katharine Houghton Hepburn, known to many as simply “Kate,” a great actress whose almost 50-year career made her an icon of the silver screen and a trailblazer for independent, progressive women.

The dedication ceremony took place at the Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center in Old Saybrook, CT, and the 44-cent, First-Class Mail stamp goes on sale nationwide today. The stamp, designed by Derry Noyes of Washington, DC, captures the beauty and thespian brilliance Hepburn so distinctively personified. It is based on a publicity still from one of Hepburn’s Oscar-nominated movies, *Woman of the Year* (1942), photographed by Clarence S. Bull.

“With the Katharine Hepburn commemorative stamp as the newest in our *Legends of Hollywood* series, we continue our proud tradition of honoring the special people who epitomize our nation’s character and aspirations,” said Postmaster General John E. Potter. “Katharine Hepburn will be remembered for generations, for both her unparalleled acting ability and being a role model for women who chose to live life on their own terms.”

Potter was joined in dedicating the stamp by Actor Sam Waterston, who served as master of ceremonies and starred with Hepburn in a 1973 TV movie adaptation of Tennessee Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie*; director Anthony Harvey, who directed her third Oscar-winning film, *The Lion in Winter* in 1968; and Chuck Still, executive director of the Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center. Hepburn’s nephew, Mundy Hepburn, was also in attendance.

“Katharine Hepburn filled the screen in real life just the way she did in the movies. Meeting her and working with her was one of the best experiences of my professional life — it certainly made me a better actor; I hope it made me a better person. It was unforgettable fun,” said Waterston.

Born May 12, 1907, in Hartford, Hepburn was the second child and oldest daughter of Dr. Thomas N. Hepburn, a surgeon, and Katharine Houghton, an advocate for women’s rights. Hepburn’s progressive and freethinking parents contributed greatly to the development of Hepburn’s bold and adventurous outlook on life. They encouraged her to take risks, speak her mind, and challenge convention: “I was

taught,” she has said, “not to be afraid of anything.”

Like her mother before her, Hepburn went to Bryn Mawr College near Philadelphia, and fell in love with acting. Soon after her graduation in 1928, she headed to Baltimore, MD, and then Manhattan to pursue a career on the stage. Her father was “heartsick over the fact that I wanted to act,” she wrote many years later in her autobiography, *Me: Stories of My Life*. Nevertheless, she had made up her mind.

With her freckles, mass of red hair, preference for wearing trousers and occasional quirkiness — such as draping a live gibbon around her neck — Hepburn stood out in Hollywood. She quickly found film success in *Morning Glory* (1933), for which she won her first Academy Award, and *Little Women* (1933), playing free-spirited Jo. Hepburn’s unconventional persona, both on and off the screen, occasionally drew detractors, and in the mid-1930s, several of her films flopped at the box office. In 1938, a poll of film exhibitors labeled her (along with Marlene Dietrich and several other stars) “box-office poison.”

In 1939, Hepburn was back on the New York stage, taking bows for playing Tracy Lord in *The Philadelphia Story*. Writer Philip Barry, who had received direct input from his star while crafting the play, had penned “Miss Hepburn’s ideal part,” wrote a reviewer for the *New York Times*. “It has whisked away the monotony and reserve that have kept her acting in the past within a very small compass.” With encouragement from her friend Howard Hughes, Hepburn made a shrewd business move and acquired the screen rights to the play. In relatively short order, filming got under way with Cary Grant and James Stewart. The movie proved to be a hit. It not only revived Hepburn’s career but ensured she would take her place among the greats of filmdom.

Over the course of her career, Hepburn made more than 40 motion pictures, including the comedy classic *Bringing up Baby* (1938) — with Hepburn as a leopard-owning heiress and Cary Grant as a paleontologist — and *The African Queen* (1951), in which she played a prim missionary spinster to Humphrey Bogart’s scruffy riverboat captain. She made nine pictures with her friend Spencer Tracy, starting with *Woman of the Year*. Hepburn received 12 Academy Award nominations for Best Actress and won four Oscars. In addition to her role as Eva Lovelace in *Morning Glory*, she was honored for playing Christina Drayton in *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* (1967), Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine in *The Lion in Winter* (1968) and Ethel Thayer in *On Golden Pond* (1981). She also received an Emmy for her performance as Jessica Medlicott in *Love Among the Ruins* (1975), a made-for-television movie.

Hepburn left her indelible mark in the annals of American film history. She is ranked the number one female in the American Film Institute’s “50 Greatest Movie Legends.” In 2003, at the age of 96, Hepburn died at her home in Fenwick.

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Katharine Hepburn Stamp  
Postmaster  
36 Main Street  
Old Saybrook, CT 06475-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by July 12, 2010.

#### **How to Order First-Day Covers**

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and postal stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

Information Fulfillment  
Dept. 6270  
U.S. Postal Service  
P.O. Box 219014  
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

**Philatelic Products**

There are *six philatelic products* available for this stamp issue:

- 465061, First-Day Cover, \$0.82.
- 465062, First-Day Cover Full Pane, \$11.30.
- 465065, Digital Color Postmark, \$1.50.
- 465084, Uncut Press Sheet, \$35.20.
- 465091, Ceremony Program, \$6.95.
- 465099, Cancellation Keepsake, \$10.95

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