

‘THRIVE NO MATTER

AN EVENING OF CREATIVITY AND HOPE SHOWCASED THE VITAL ROLE OF PRODUCERS IN SHAPING THE CINEMATIC LANDSCAPE AT THE 36TH ANNUAL PGA AWARDS.

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The industry's brightest talents gathered on February 8 to honor the creativity and hard-won achievements of producers at the 36th Annual PGA Awards. Most importantly, it was a night of community for producers to come together and show their support for one another amid immensely challenging times. Across the board, awardees shared moving reminders of resilience, the importance of taking care of one another, and the craft of producing.

Among those celebrated were industry powerhouses Paula Weinstein and Lynda Obst, both of whom were posthumously honored with the PGA Trailblazer Award. The two pioneers died in March and October, respectively.

Jane Fonda opened the presentation paying tribute to the “one-of-a-kind, beloved, irreplaceable” Weinstein, whose career included serving as president of United Artists, executive vice president at Fox, and vice president at Warner Bros.

“Paula represented change in our industry—particularly for women,” Fonda said. “The results that happened when women began to show up in Hollywood became important for everyone because when women began developing and directing and producing films, films began to reflect voices that had been missing.

“In the ‘70s, women began claiming their power, and Paula was one of the first,” Fonda continued. “First, she was my agent, then she became my best friend, and before I knew it, she was running a studio, and then she was a producer. And god, she was a good producer.”

Fonda described how Weinstein made a practice of marrying her values to wildly popular films and TV series she produced including *9 to 5*, *Grace and Frankie*, *Citizen Cohn*, *Too Big to Fail*, *Recount*, *Blood Diamond* and *The Perfect Storm*.

“But I think Paula’s biggest legacy, besides her enduring work making great films, is the hundreds of young people whom she found time to guide, including my own children and all the young women she mentored,” Fonda said. “So many of the movers and shakers in this town now were mentored by Paula.”

The irrepressible and successful Lynda Obst produced the 2003



Mike Farah, Stephanie Allain,
Charles Roven and Donald De Line

comedy *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*, launching the career of actress Kate Hudson, who vividly recalled the first time the two met and immediately connected.

“I feel incredibly honored to celebrate her tonight among those who know how hard it is to even get a movie made, let alone one that continues to resonate, generation after generation,” Hudson said. “There aren’t many films that actually achieve that, and I feel fortunate to have had that experience with Lynda.

“It is rare for someone to take a 22-year-old ingenue and empower them to be a side-by-side leader,” she continued. “The success of her work is a testament to her drive and fierce desire to tell stories in the right way.” Those stories included *Flashdance*, *Adventures in Babysitting*, *The Fisher King*, *Sleepless in Seattle*, *Contact* and *Interstellar*.

Hudson recalled nervously accompanying Obst to a movie theater in New York City to see *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*. But she needn’t have worried. Laughter filled the auditorium almost from the start.

“She’s like, ‘Do you hear that? It’s the sound of a hit movie.’ I would have never had that experience if she hadn’t grabbed me by the arm and pulled me into that room,” Hudson said. “That is what she did with me every step along the way. She swept me up and just propelled me forward.”

Taika Waititi, recipient of the Norman Lear Achievement Award in Television, delivered a quintessentially witty speech in which he highlighted similarities with the award’s namesake.

“Upon reflection, I think it’s pretty appropriate that I get this award because Norman and myself share a lot in common, (like)

WHAT'



Anora producers and Zanuck Award winners Alex Coco, Samantha Quan and Sean Baker



The Cosm team, winners of the Innovation Award for Orbital



Fortune Feimster accepting on behalf of Saturday Night Live



The producers of Baby Reindeer accepting their award



The Making of Shōgun team, winner of Outstanding Short Form Program



David O. Selznick Achievement Award recipient Chris Meledandri

making television. We share some excellent Russian-Jewish roots and genes, and both our dads went to jail," Waititi said, eliciting laughter from the packed ballroom.

Waititi, who has produced lauded series including *Reservation Dogs* and *What We Do in the Shadows*, thanked FX for believing in Indigenous shows. He expressed special gratitude for Bird Runningwater, former director of the Sundance Institute's Indigenous, DEI, and Artist Development programs, who selected Waititi's first short film, *Two Cars, One Night*, to be screened at the Sundance Film Festival in 2002.

"That kick-started my opportunities and career in Hollywood. Without his support all those years ago, I wouldn't be (this) stressed-out, anxiety-ridden shell of a human you see barely standing before you tonight," Waititi joked.

Jon Favreau, who presented Waititi with the award, said that Waititi's work—whether writing, directing, acting or producing—engages the audience through insight and laughter.

"His storytelling invites us all to see the world through the perspective of characters who are worlds away or right next door," Favreau said.

Walt Disney Company CEO Bob Iger presented the Milestone Award to colleague Dana Walden, cochair of Disney Entertainment. The prestigious award honors those who have made historic contributions to the entertainment industry, with past recipients including Louis B. Mayer, Sherry Lansing, George Lucas and Kathleen Kennedy, and Charles D. King, along with Iger and Walt Disney himself.

"She's probably had a hand in more television series than anyone else in the business," Iger said, praising Walden as "a person of courage, great instincts, and the ability to serve as a partner to the creative community and not an adversary."

Walden recalled the first time she attended the PGA Awards in 1993 in support of *The X-Files* when no one could foresee that lead

character Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) would empower waves of young women to pursue careers in STEM. Walden likened this impact to the hope felt by so many young viewers watching a father accept his gay son on *Glee*, and how real teachers have felt seen due to the heartfelt comedy of *Abbott Elementary*.

"Wonderful and unexpected things happen when you put great stories into the world. I'm so grateful to so many of you in this room who keep doing it year after year because those stories have never been more needed," Walden said. "I am not exactly sure what's going to happen next to this city that we love. What I am certain of, though, is that the people in this room will find creative, funny and beautiful ways to remind us of the importance of the industry in this industry town."

Steve Carell presented Chris Meledandri with the David O. Selznick Achievement Award recognizing his impressive body of work. Carell joked, "Chris Meledandri is being honored this evening for one simple reason: He is better than you are."

Meledandri, chief executive officer of Illumination—whose credits include the *Despicable Me* franchise featuring Carell—recalled his first day working as a runner for movie producer Dan Melnick at 20th Century Fox.

"I found a parking spot right outside the company offices with my name painted on it. Dan inadvertently gave me my first lesson in producing, which is that everybody matters," Meledandri said. "Each time I pulled into that space, I imagined myself as the producer I hoped to one day become."

While driving around Hollywood, Meledandri caught glimpses of Orson Wells, Billy Wilder and Francis Ford Coppola.

"I was in heaven," Meledandri said. "I had been raised in New York City by parents who loved movies but would only take my sister and me to films they wanted to see—ironically, not a single animated movie."

In his acceptance speech, Meledandri expressed gratitude to many of his partners, including Comcast and NBCUniversal. He encouraged filmmakers to continue their important work, especially during challenging times.

"As producers, we are entrepreneurs, and we must keep adapting to find ways to thrive no matter what. And to do that, we have to disrupt our own norm," Meledandri said. "It's up to us now to build on our strengths, to discover ways to keep



Taika Waititi accepting the Norman Lear Award



Deborah Calla, recipient of the Vance Van Patten Entrepreneurial Spirit Producing Award



Kate Hudson and Jane Fonda



The producing team from *Shōgun* backstage with their award for Outstanding Producer of Episodic Television

our movies, our process, our budgets, and our engagement with audiences searingly relevant."

The PGA contributed a portion of its net proceeds to the Producers Guild of America Members Fund for members affected by the Los Angeles wildfires. Adding to the magic of the evening, the show put on a hilarious musical number honoring the perseverance

of producers during an acceptance speech for a fake award, with the hope that the room would be fooled into thinking it all was real. It worked.

Watch "The Making of 'Miracle'" and all PGA Award acceptance speeches on the PGA's YouTube channel.



Jeff Hermann accepting the award for *The Wild Robot*



2025 NOMINEES AND WINNERS

Darryl F. Zanuck Award for Outstanding Producer of Theatrical Motion Pictures

Anora

The Brutalist
A Complete Unknown
Conclave
Dune: Part Two
Emilia Pérez
A Real Pain
September 5
The Substance
Wicked

Award for Outstanding Producer of Animated Theatrical Motion Pictures

The Wild Robot

Flow
Inside Out 2
Moana 2
Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl

Award for Outstanding Producer of Documentary Motion Pictures

Super/Man:

The Christopher Reeve Story

Gaucha Gaucha
Mediha
Mountain Queen:
The Summits of Lhakpa Sherpa
Porcelain War
We Will Dance Again

Norman Felton Award for Outstanding Producer of Episodic Television - Drama

Shōgun

Bad Sisters
The Diplomat
Fallout
Slow Horses

Danny Thomas Award for Outstanding Producer of Episodic Television - Comedy

Hacks

Abbott Elementary
The Bear
Curb Your Enthusiasm
Only Murders in the Building

David L. Wolper Award for Outstanding Producer of Limited or Anthology Series Television

Baby Reindeer

FEUD: Capote Vs. The Swans
The Penguin
Ripley
True Detective: Night Country

Award for Outstanding Producer of Televised or Streamed Motion Pictures

The Greatest Night in Pop

Carry-On
The Killer
Rebel Ridge
Unfrosted



Lori McCreary, Susan Sprung and Mari Jo Winkler



Meghan Walsh and Caitrin Rogers accepting the award for Outstanding Producer of Non-Fiction Television



The award-winning *Hacks* producing team



Lizzie Gillett
accepts the
award for
Super/Man



Milestone
Award recipient
Dana Walden
with Bob Iger



George
Hencken
accepting
the award for
*The Greatest
Night in Pop*



The Traitors
producing
team with
their award

Award for Outstanding Producer of Non-Fiction Television

STEVE! (martin) a documentary in 2 pieces

30 for 30
Conan O'Brien Must Go
The Jinx - Part Two
Welcome to Wrexham

Award for Outstanding Producer of Live Entertainment, Variety, Sketch, Standup & Talk Television

Saturday Night Live

Ali Wong: Single Lady
The Daily Show
Last Week Tonight with John Oliver
The Late Show with Stephen Colbert

Award for Outstanding Producer of Game & Competition Television

The Traitors

The Amazing Race
RuPaul's Drag Race
Top Chef
The Voice

Award for Outstanding Sports Program

Simone Biles Rising

Formula 1: Drive to Survive
Hard Knocks: Offseason with the New York Giants
Messi's World Cup:
The Rise of a Legend
Triumph: Jesse Owens and the Berlin Olympics

Award for Outstanding Children's Program

Sesame Street

Avatar: The Last Airbender
Fraggle Rock: Back to the Rock
Percy Jackson and the Olympians
SpongeBob SquarePants

Award for Outstanding Short Form Program

Shōgun - The Making of Shōgun

The Crown: Farewell To A Royal Epic
Hacks: Bit By Bit
The Penguin: Inside Gotham
Real Time with Bill Maher: Overtime

2025 PGA Innovation Award

Orbital (Cosm Studios / Planetary Collective / Kuva)

Critterz (Native Foreign)
Emperor (Atlas V / Reynard Films / France Télévisions)
Impulse: Playing with Reality (Anagram / Floréal / France Télévisions)
The Pirate Queen with Lucy Liu (Singer Studios)
What If...? - An Immersive Story (Marvel Studios / ILM Immersive / Disney+) ■

For a complete list of producers associated with the nominated productions, visit producersguild.org/producers-guild-of-america-awards-celebrates-top-honors



Sesame Street's
award-winning
producing team