

Shirley Douglas to receive International Achievement Award at 2009 Crystal Awards

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Toronto, ON - Women in Film & Television - Toronto (WIFT-T) is thrilled to announce actress Shirley Douglas as this year's recipient of the International Achievement Award. This award is presented to a Canadian woman working in screen-based media for her significant and well recognized body of work in Canada and abroad. Ms. Douglas will receive her award at the 2009 Crystal Awards gala luncheon on November 30, 2009.

"Shirley Douglas inspires so many of us in this industry," says Sadia Zaman, Executive Director of WIFT-T. "She has consistently managed to do work that she loves, and at the same time remain true to her convictions. That is a rare feat in any industry. We are so excited to be able to present her with a Crystal Award."

"For the last 25 years, WIFT-T has played a vital part in the success of the Canadian screen-based industry," says Shirley Douglas. "For me to be recognized by this extraordinary group in any way is a tremendous honour."

Shirley Douglas' career has encompassed numerous roles on stages and screens in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. She has worked with famed directors, from Stanley Kubrick (*Lolita*) to David Cronenberg (*Dead Ringers*), and has portrayed many influential women, from Nellie McClung to the matriarch May Bailey in *The Wind at My Back* for CBC-TV. Other highlights include her performance as Lena in *Turning to Stone* for CBC, and her 2006 portrayal of former American Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in the ABC mini-series, *The Path to 9/11*.

An illustrious stage actress, Shirley is respected for her depiction of Martha in Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and Hagar Shipley in Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel*. She performed in Sharon Pollock's *Blood Relations* at the National Arts Centre, Stephen Sondheim's *Company* at CanStage, Tennessee Williams' *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and Jean Racine's *Phedre* at the Stratford Festival. Shirley appeared with her son Kiefer Sutherland at the Royal Alexandra Theatre and the National Arts Centre in *The Glass Menagerie*, and also performed in *The Vagina Monologues*.

Born in Weyburn, Saskatchewan in 1934, Shirley is the daughter of Irma and Tommy Douglas—former Canadian statesman, Premier of Saskatchewan, and father of Canada's public health system. She trained at the Banff School of Fine Arts before moving to the

Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, England. After graduating in 1954, Shirley continued performing in England for several years.

Well-known for her activism, Shirley first became involved in the American Civil Rights Movement and the campaign against the Vietnam War; later, she campaigned on behalf of immigrants and women. She helped establish *Friends of the Black Panthers*, which led to her arrest on charges of conspiracy to possess explosives. The case was dismissed and Shirley was exonerated. She continued working in the United States until 1977, when she returned to Canada with her three children: Thomas and twins Rachel and Kiefer.

Shirley co-founded the first Canadian chapter of PAND (Performing Artists for Nuclear Disarmament) and is one of Canada's most prominent activists in the fight to preserve publicly funded health care. She was named an officer of the Order of Canada in 2003 and was inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame in 2004. Shirley has been nominated for several Gemini awards and received one for her performance in the television film *Shadowlake*.

The 2009 Crystal Awards gala luncheon will take place Monday, November 30, 2009 at The Fairmont Royal York in Toronto. To purchase tickets, visit www.wift.com

The 2009 Crystal Awards are presented in partnership with NBC Universal and Canwest Broadcasting.

For a complete list of the 2009 Crystal Award winners, visit www.wift.com.

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Women in Film & Television-Toronto (WIFT-T) is a not for profit professional organization founded in 1984. WIFT-T supports women in screen-based media (film, television, and digital media) to build, advance, and sustain their careers nationally and internationally. WIFT-T does this through hands-on high quality programming, mentoring, networking, and industry events that recognize the talents and potential of women. WIFT-T's mission is to enhance the skills of its members so they can become significant decision-makers at all levels of the industry.

For more information, visit www.wift.com or www.canadianfilmmaker.com.

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