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CHICAGO – The Hollywood Celebrities & Memorabilia Show yields many surprise guests, and it is the actresses who often have the most interesting stories. Tippi Hedren ("The Birds"), Stella Stevens (original "The Nutty Professor") and Karen Lynn Gorney ("Saturday Night Fever") shared their insights.

All three actresses crossed into different generations. Hedren of course is known for her early 1960s work with Alfred Hitchcock, Stevens worked with both Elvis Presley and Dean Martin, and Gorney was one of the most famous dance partners in movie history when she twirled at the disco with John Travolta.

The Hollywood Celebrities & Memorabilia Show is a biannual event that brings celebrities to Chicago to meet, sign autographs and interact with their admirers. Hosts Ray and Sharon Court announced at the March show that the upcoming October show in Chicago would be their last, as they are retiring.

Tippi Hedren, Stella Stevens and Karen Lynn Gorney sat down and talked with HollywoodChicago.com at the show, and Joe Arce had them pose for photographs.



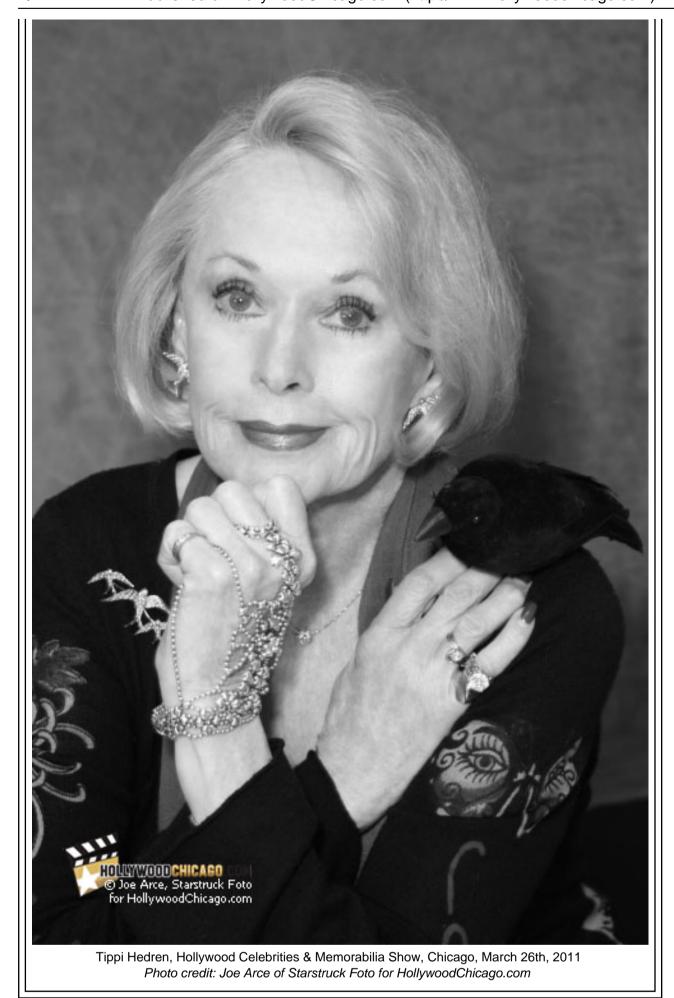
🂢 Tippi Hedren, "The Birds," "Marnie"

Tippi Hedren was discovered by Alfred Hitchcock as he watched her in a commercial in the early 1960s. He was looking for a cool blonde in the mode of Grace Kelly to develop for his films. From that inauspicious beginning Hedren went on to star in two of Hitchcock's most memorable films, "The Birds" and "Marnie." Hitchcock and Hedren parted ways over a contract dispute.

Hedren has worked steadily in films and TV over the years, but nothing as splashy as her Hitchcock roles. She focused her energies in the early 1980s on her "Roar Foundation" and Shambala Preserve, which protects lions, tigers, bobcats and leopards, and continues those efforts today. She is also known as the mother of actress Melanie Griffith.

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HollywoodChicago.com: Over the years, what did you find most difficult about the audition process if you were fighting for a role?

Tippi Hedren: I never had to audition, I never had to do it for a role. When I got 'The Birds,' Alfred Hitchcock saw me on a national commercial I was doing.

HollywoodChicago.com: Have you seen 'Mad Men,' which depicts that era in advertising?

Hedren: Yes, I've seen the show occasionally. That's the time when I was doing all the commercial work.

HollywoodChicago.com: Besides being identified as an actress, what other occupation or advocacy do you want to be remembered by?

Hedren: Well, definitely my rescue work with lions and tigers. That has become my life's work. I still have to act and do things like this, but I am on a mission to stop the breeding of lions and tigers as personal pets or for financial gain. These are all animals born in the United States, which are sold as pets, and that's absurd. The lion and tiger are apex predators, top of the food chain, one of the foremost dangerous animals in the world. Why our country allows for these animals to be sold for breeding or pets is insane. In the true sense of the word.

HollywoodChicago.com: You've played opposite such diverse men as Sean Connery, Marlon Brando and Rod Taylor. What career pressures do you think the leading men of the era had that were either different than women or the same?

Hedren: I don't think men have too many pressures.

HollywoodChicago.com: Even in keeping their marquee value?



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Hedren: In that sense, of course. Age is a great killer of marquee value, because everybody wants to look at the young people. It's kind of sad because when we become older we acquire more knowledge and finesse about life.

HollywoodChicago.com: After you crossed the line into stardom, which celebrity or politician did you most want to meet, and did you get that opportunity to do so?

Hedren: Well, right now I want to meet Johnny Depp, and I haven't had the opportunity. Also, during my early days I wish I had met Winston Churchill, he was a very complicated man, but he was so powerful and a great governor of the people. I did meet John F. Kennedy, he was on vacation – as I was – in the South of France.

HollywoodChicago.com: What was your personal reaction to President Kennedy's assassination?

Hedren: Like everyone else, stunned and very angry that it could have happened. I found out about it while driving to a training lesson with the horse I would eventually ride in 'Marnie.' I don't think there is an adult in the United States who was alive then that doesn't remember where they were when they heard that Kennedy was shot.

HollywoodChicago.com: What is the best lesson you ever received regarding acting and in what performance did you best apply it?

Hedren: I can tell you that. When I was doing 'The Birds,' remember the scene when I was bringing the tea to Jessica Tandy? Mr. Hitchcock directed me to be very bitchy in that scene. I thought, 'that's fun, bitchy is fun.' After that scene was over and assembled, Tandy and Mr. Hitchcock watched it together in the editing room. I heard that she was very quiet after the scene was over. She turned to Hitch and said, 'nobody is going to like that girl.' He listened and he heard her. I will love her forever for doing that because he brought the set back and we did the scene over. It was the same words, same set, same actors, and I did it in a compassionate way. It was a great lesson for me on how different you can do a character, from the great Jessica Tandy.



Stella Stevens, "The Nutty Professor," "The Poseidon Adventure"

leading men were as diverse as Glenn Ford, Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, Elvis Presley, Jason Robards and Ernest Borgnine. The directors included Vincente Minnelli, Peter Bogdonovich, John Cassavetes, Sam Peckinpah and Jerry Lewis (he also directed "The Nutty Professor")		
She probably is best remembered as the tough-talking survivor in the 1972 version of "The	Poseidon Adventure," but along the way she has	
done it all, including producing, directing and being featured as "Playmate of the Month" in	Playboy.	





HollywoodChicago.com: The film version of Li'l Abner (1959) felt almost incomplete and disjointed. Was it a smooth production?

Stella Stevens: It seemed to be, but you can't tell anybody what to do if they're doing it. I just did what they told me to do, I was very young at the time. And now I'm even younger! It was a good time, it was fun.

HollywoodChicago.com: What was more disruptive on a movie set...Elvis Presley or Jerry Lewis?

Stevens: Wow, well Jerry Lewis had written, planned and done everything in 'The Nutty Professor,' so it had to be perfect. I tried to be as perfect as I possibly could be, and he was very kind to me. On the set he knew exactly what he was doing, and was very proud of it. It was fun and laughing the whole time.

Elvis was okay, I was never sure about him. I didn't run up to him and say, 'I love you' or anything like that, I wish I had now. [laughs] I wanted to stay professional so he would respect me. He was so big at the time.

HollywoodChicago.com: You have a notable footnote in photo technology history, participating in the first shoot with high speed Ektachrome. What were the circumstances of that historic shoot and how did you get involved?

Stevens: Just fell into it, I guess. [laughs] Some things just come to you, you don't really know what they are or what they'll end up being. The inventors themselves approached me.

HollywoodChicago.com: Did posing for Playboy shock most people? How profoundly did it change your career at the time or did it at all?

Stevens: I thought the pictures were nice and good. But the reaction was I was called everything but a girl. So many people made fun of me. I was one of the early ones to do that, and if you see them there was not much actually shown. I thought it might hurt me, it did a little. In the end it was okay, but it wasn't the best thing I did for my career.

HollywoodChicago.com: You were in a classic blaxploitation film - 'Cleopatra Jones and the Casino of Gold' - what do you appreciate



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about the decision to do the film in the retrospect of now?

Stella Stevens: We did it in China, and I enjoyed every moment because I got to be bad. It let everything out! [laughs] I was charged up after that. And it was different than anything else I've ever done, I still like it.

HollywoodChicago.com: Who was the coolest guy in the great stable of directors you worked with - George Marshall, Vincent Minnelli, Peter Bogdonovich or John Cassavetes, and why?

Stevens: I hate to say just one out of all of those, because I was happy to work with all of them. They were so kind to me, so I have to say all of them.

HollywoodChicago.com: Which famous celebrity wouldn't take "no" for an answer was the most persistent in seeking your 'charms'?

Stella Stevens: It depends on what they wanted to do with my 'charms.' [laughs] They don't say that, charms. [laughs] It was more below the waist. I had that a lot, because they think you're a slut if you work like I did. But I can fight, I know how to take care of myself, I had to. No one was hovering around me to protect me, I had to protect myself.

HollywoodChicago.com: What can you tell us about Glenn Ford that the rest of the world doesn't know?

Stevens: He was funny and was wonderful to work with, but he had one quirky thing also. He would just sit there and start fake crying. He would do that just for fun. I will never forget that, to see a man start crying.



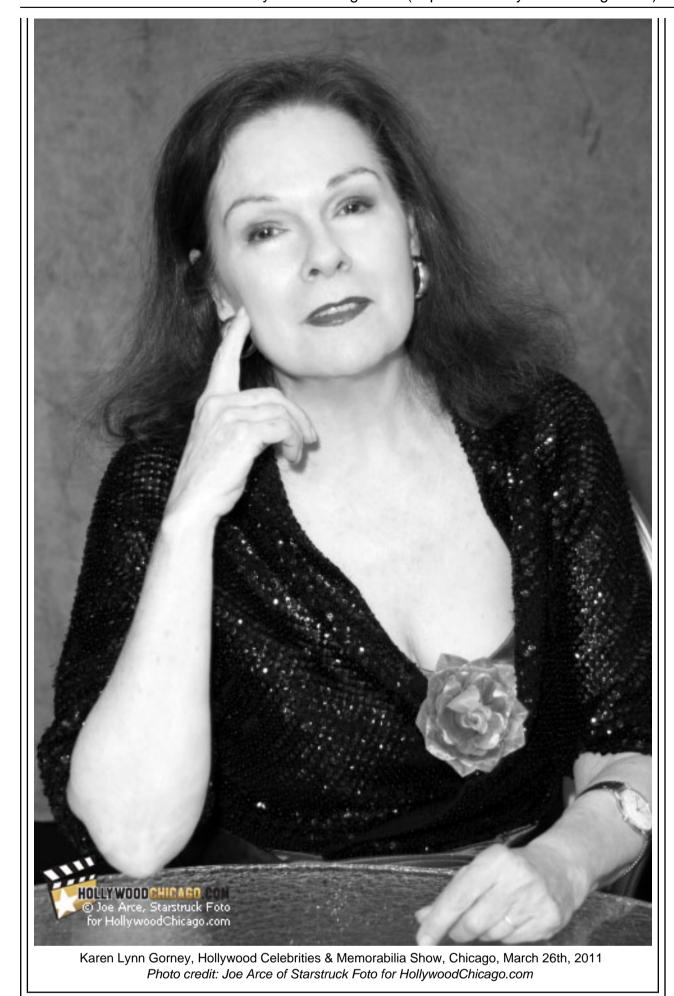
💢 Karen Lynn Gorney, "Saturday Night Fever"

Every great dance movie needs the ultimate partner, and Karen Lynn Gorney was one of the most famous. In 1977, a phenomenon was launched with the release of "Saturday Night Fever." John Travolta became "King of the Disco" movement, and his Queen was Karen Lynn Gorney, as his dance partner Stephanie.

Gorney has an interesting pedigree. Her father was song composer Jay Gorney, who co-wrote the famous Depression-era song, "Brother Can

You Spare a Dime." She started her career on the daytime drama "All My Children.	"," and since Fever has worked in stage, television and film.





HollywoodChicago.com: Your father was a music composer, with 'Brother Can You Spare a Dime' being part of the great American songbook. What did his show business experience teach you about your own experience in the business?

Karen Lynn Gorney: He collaborated with Yip Harburg [who also co-wrote 'Over the Rainbow' with Harold Arlen], and if it wasn't for Yip I never would have been born, because Yip stole my father's first wife away. Her name was Eddy, and she used to say 'I would never marry anyone who didn't write 'Brother Can You Spare a Dime.' [laughs]

He used to say stuff more about acting, like 'too much emphasis is no emphasis at all.' And 'take it t'easy,' which was his version of easy does it. He lived into his early nineties, so he must have known what he was doing. He was older when I was born, near 50, so he had a lot of experience once I got to know him. He would always coach me in acting and in performing his music.

HollywoodChicago.com: What do you think is the most misunderstood notion that people have about your most famous film, 'Saturday Night Fever'?

Gorney: That it was a film about disco. It was really about so much more. If the disco was the court, then John Travolta was the King and I was the Queen, and we went and strutted our stuff on that court. This became a way to money, fame and power, based on how you shook you're booty on the disco. Which is exactly how it has been since the beginning of time. Anybody that could dance rose in social prominence.

It was about the illusion that the court – the disco – provides. Because that's not what this existence is about. It's one aspect, it's not everything.

HollywoodChicago.com: The poignant ending of Fever is so different than many films with that kind of subject...where you and Travolta's



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character agree to become friends. How hard did the production have to fight to get that more vague ending that a direct coming together?

Gorney: We shot it a number of different ways, and they decided on that. It was kind of a breakthrough, that a man and a woman could be friends, and partners on the dance floor. The Stephanie character was after power and money, and couldn't allow herself to respond to him as a human being because he was too low on the food chain. So her response both was human and she pulled herself back.

HollywoodChicago.com: Since you recently did a lot of nostalgia work for the Disco era, what song best allows you to remember the joy of it and why?

Gorney: 'Disco Inferno' by The Trammps. That song is so powerful on many levels. Also anything by The Ohio Players.

HollywoodChicago.com: Post Saturday Night Fever, were you not getting the roles that you wanted or were you steering what you wanted to do with your life in a different direction?

Gorney: They didn't know what to do with me. I was ahead of my time, and they didn't know what to put me in. In the sequel "Staying Alive," [Sylvester] Stallone wrote everybody out who was involved in the first one. Mainly I've done TV and stage.

HollywoodChicago.com: Tell us something about Denny Terrio that the rest of the world doesn't know?

Gorney: He's nice and skinny, and he's a Gemini. And he's really easy to dance with, even in a certain way easier than John. Although I'm sure John's rhythmic construction is more compelling, if you know what I mean.

The FINAL Hollywood Celebrities & Memorabilia Show will be in Chicago, October 1st and 2nd, 2011. Click here for details. [15] For more information about Tippi Hedren's Shambala Perserve, click here. [16]



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