

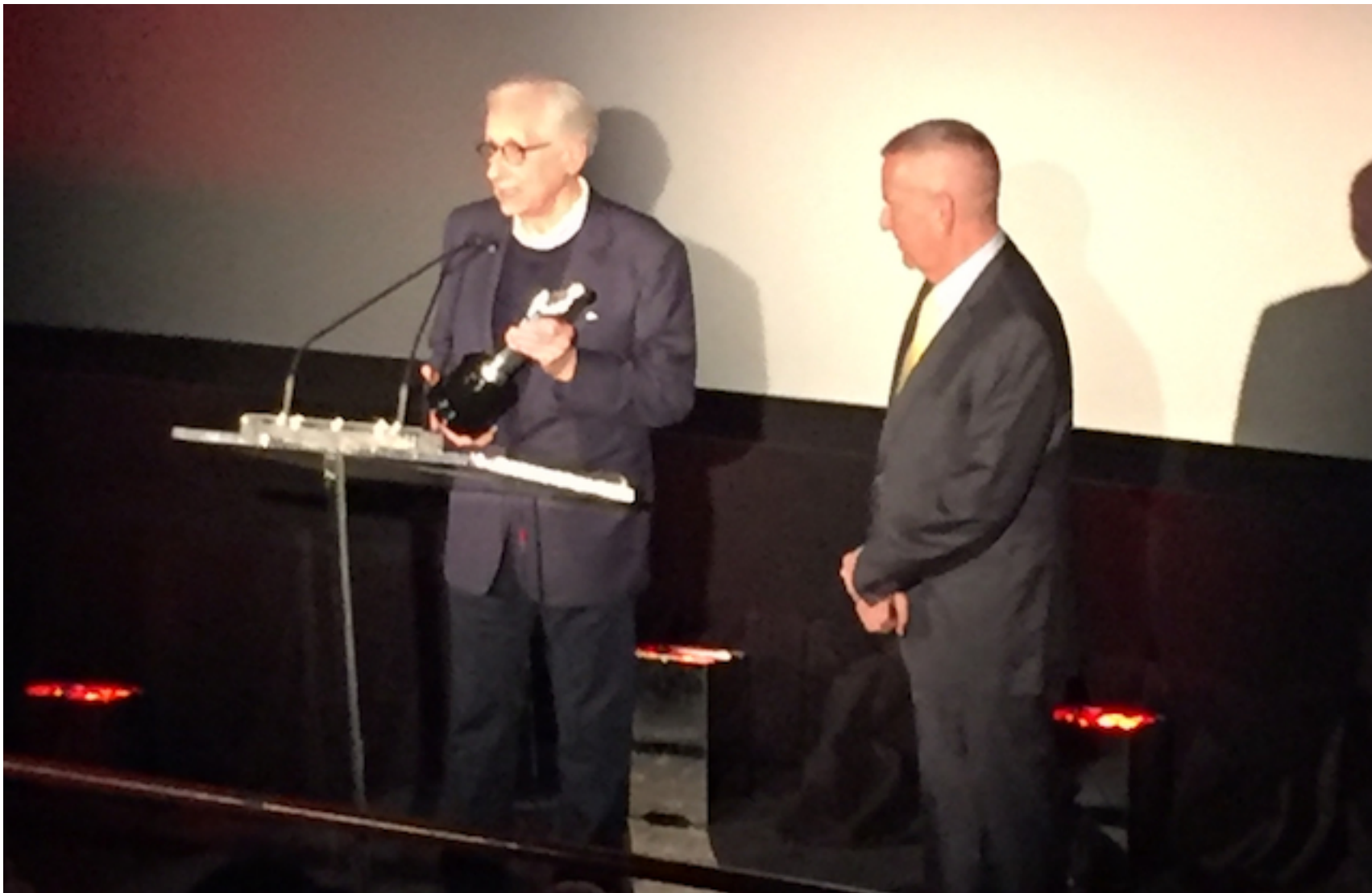
Interviews: Honorees of Awards Night at the Chicago International Television Festival

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CHICAGO – It was an evening to honor the past, current and future brands in TV media at the 53rd Chicago International Television Awards Night on Thursday, March 23rd, 2017. TV advertising creator Joe Sedelmaier, WGN-TV Entertainment Reporter Dean Richards and Amazon Studios – represented by Development Executive Jill Arthur – were the individual honorees at the ceremony.

Also honored with awards were an array of television commercials and productions. Top prizes in the advertising categories went to FCB -Chicago, The Martin Agency and mcgarrybowen. The NBC-TV series “Chicago Justice” was awarded the top festival prize, the Gold Hugo, for a Dramatic Program.



Michael Kutza (right) Honors Joe Sedelmaier with the Chicago Legend Award at the Television Festival

Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

This was the 53rd Chicago International Television Festival, which began as a component of the Chicago International Film Festival, and was spun off into a separate festival in the Spring of 2016. Attending the Awards Night was the Founder and Artistic Director of the Film Festival, Michael Kutza, and members of Cinema/Chicago, who facilitate both the Film and TV festivals. Event organizer Sam Flancher highlighted some memorable moments from the three-day fest, including screenings and panels associated with “Public Housing Unit” (Independent), “American Playboy” (Amazon Studios) and “When the Streetlights Go On” (Hulu), in addition to comedian Pete Holmes presenting his

current HBO series, “Crashing.”

HollywoodChicago.com was at the Awards Night, and scored some Red Carpet interviews with two of the individual honorees. Dean Richards was not able to attend due to illness, but his letter of appreciation was read at the ceremony.



Joe Sedelmaier, Chicago Legend Award Honoree

TV commercial director Joe Sedelmaier was the originator of the catchphrase “Where’s the Beef!” for a series of Wendy’s franchise national spots, along with a whole slew of other famous television ads of the 1960s through the 1990s. Sedelmaier’s distinct style and eye for unique casting set him apart in advertising-on-TV history, and appropriately he received the Chicago Legend honor on Awards Night.



Chicago Legend Award Honoree Joe Sedelmaier
Photo credit: Chicago International Television Festival

HollywoodChicago.com: What does it mean to you to be honored by a Chicago Television Festival, since Chicago is one of the greatest advertising cities in the country?

Joe Sedelmaier: I consider myself a Chicagoan. I came here to study at the Art Institute in 1951 when I was 18 years old, and I’ve been here ever since. I still think Chicago is the best city in the country.

HollywoodChicago.com: When you began to change the way that TV commercials could be conceived, and simply make them more entertaining, why do you think clients and agencies were scared of that concept?

Sedelmaier: I have no idea. [laughs] But that’s the way it goes with the whole human thing – nobody wants to take a risk. But to be entertaining is not risky, everybody likes to be entertained.

HollywoodChicago.com: What do you observe about TV commercial production today that both encourages you and distresses you?

Sedelmaier: Besides the technology, I don’t find much of a difference. I think the quality is there, and there are good commercials and bad ones, just like always.

HollywoodChicago.com: What director of movies do you think would make a good TV commercial director and why?

Sedelmaier: You know what... I have no idea. [laughs] In some ways, it’s easier to go from short form to long form than vice versa. I used to make 30 second ‘movies,’ and I think if I only did long form I would find it difficult to adjust to that short a length. ‘I gotta say something in 30 seconds. Forget about it!’ There have been directors who have done commercials over the years, but they seem to be the exception.



Development Executive Jill Arthur of Amazon Studios

Representing Amazon Studios, who received the Commitment to Excellence in Television Production Awards, Development Executive Jill Arthur is part of a team that is redefining the scheduling and production of TV programming. Their stable of Emmy and Golden Globe winning series include “Transparent,” “Mozart in the Jungle” and “The Man in the High Castle,” along with original programming like “Red Oaks,”

“Bosch” and “Hand to God.” The film division of the studio just scored their first two Oscars, when “Manchester by the Sea” won Best Screenplay, and Best Actor for Casey Affleck.



Jill Arthur of Amazon Studios, with Michael Kutza
Photo credit: Chicago International Television Festival

HollywoodChicago.com: One of the more interesting elements of Amazon Studios is how you found TV pilots when you first began. You’d actually asked for submissions from anyone, got the public to vote on them, and ‘green lighted’ them based on reaction and creative factors. How does that approach still play out at the studio?

Jill Arthur: It’s something comes through that is really great, we still want to produce it. It’s not the same producing structure at this point as when we began, but it’s still an important part of the business.

HollywoodChicago.com: I know you’re not directly involved in this, but how did the film division come about, to suddenly produce Woody Allen and win Oscars?

Arthur: The hiring of [producer] Ted Hope was the key. He built the film division and clearly knows what he is doing.

HollywoodChicago.com: What is the studio excited about regarding what is coming up?

Arthur: We have great stuff coming up in both drama and half hour series. We’ve got ‘Jack Ryan,’ executive produced by Carleton Cuse, and of course the reboot of ‘The Tick’ with original creator Ben Edlund. I think it’s the best it’s ever been, and we’re really looking forward to relaunching it. Plus there are new seasons of ‘Transparent,’ ‘Mozart in the Jungle’ and ‘Patriot’ and we’ve just put up some new pilots, including ‘The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel.’ And as they say, more to come.

Cinema/Chicago is the organization that facilitates the Chicago International Television Festival and the Chicago International Film Festival in October. Their next event is the CineYouth Festival on May 4th through the 6th, 2017. [Click here](#) [21] for details.



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By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [23]
Writer, Editorial Coordinator
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [22]

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