

Podtalk: Michael Kutza of 54th Chicago International Film Festival in 'A Tribute to Colleen Moore'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 20, 2018 - 7:08am

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CHICAGO – The Founder and CEO of the Chicago International Film Festival (CIFF) is Michael Kutza. In 1964, when he had the idea for the festival, legendary Chicago Sun-Times columnist Irv Kupcinet suggested a person who could help start the festivities. That person was silent film-era movie star Colleen Moore.

One of Michael's final duties in the day-to-day operations of the festival – he will be retiring at the end of 2018 – is to pay homage to that movie star who set him up with the film celebrities whose presence helped to sell that first CIFF to the Windy City. "A Tribute to Colleen Moore" will take place on Sunday, October 21st, 2018, the last day of the 54th edition of the Festival. Michael will show a retrospect of film clips, screen one of Moore's few "talkies" (1933's "The Power and the Glory") and remember Colleen Moore with one of her grandchildren, Billy Hargrave. For details and tickets, [click here](#). [24]



Michael Kutza Presents 'A Tribute to Colleen Moore' at the 54th CIFF
Photo credit: Chicago International Film Festival

Colleen Moore was born in Michigan, and was linked to Chicago early in her life through her legendary uncle, Walter Howey. Howey was the managing editor of William Randolph Hearst’s Chicago Examiner, and was connected to the movies through his friendship with director D.W. Griffith (“Birth of a Nation”). As a favor, Howey asked Griffith to screen test his niece in Hollywood in 1917. What was thought to be a random act turned into nearly a 20 year career for Moore in the movies, where she specialized in melodrama and comedy, and made over 60 films.

It was her starring role in “Flaming Youth” (1923) that propelled her to the top of box office draws in the early 1920s. With her distinct and highly copied bob hair style, she was to epitomize the “flapper” girls of that era. Her short marriage to agent John McCormack also was the stuff of legend. One of her best friends, Adela Rogers St. John, wrote a story based on Moore’s brief coupling, which focused on her husband’s excessive drinking. That story became the basis for “A Star is Born,” and all those film versions have roots in Moore’s actual matrimonial situation. She retired from films in 1934, tired of trying to maintain an image, and learned stock brokering. She lived in the Gold Coast neighborhood in Chicago when she met Michael Kutza in 1964, and moved back to California before she passed away in 1988.

In PART ONE of a Podtalk with Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com, Michael Kutza reflects on meeting Colleen Moore, and how her association with him helped to launch the Chicago International Film Festival.

In PART TWO, Michael talks further about the legend of Colleen Moore, including her collection of miniature doll houses, and what she would say to him if she were to walk into his office today.

The 54th Chicago International Film Festival primarily takes place at the AMC River East 21, 322 East Illinois Street, Chicago from October 10th to October 21st, 2018. [Click here \[25\]](#) for film schedules, information and to purchase tickets.



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