

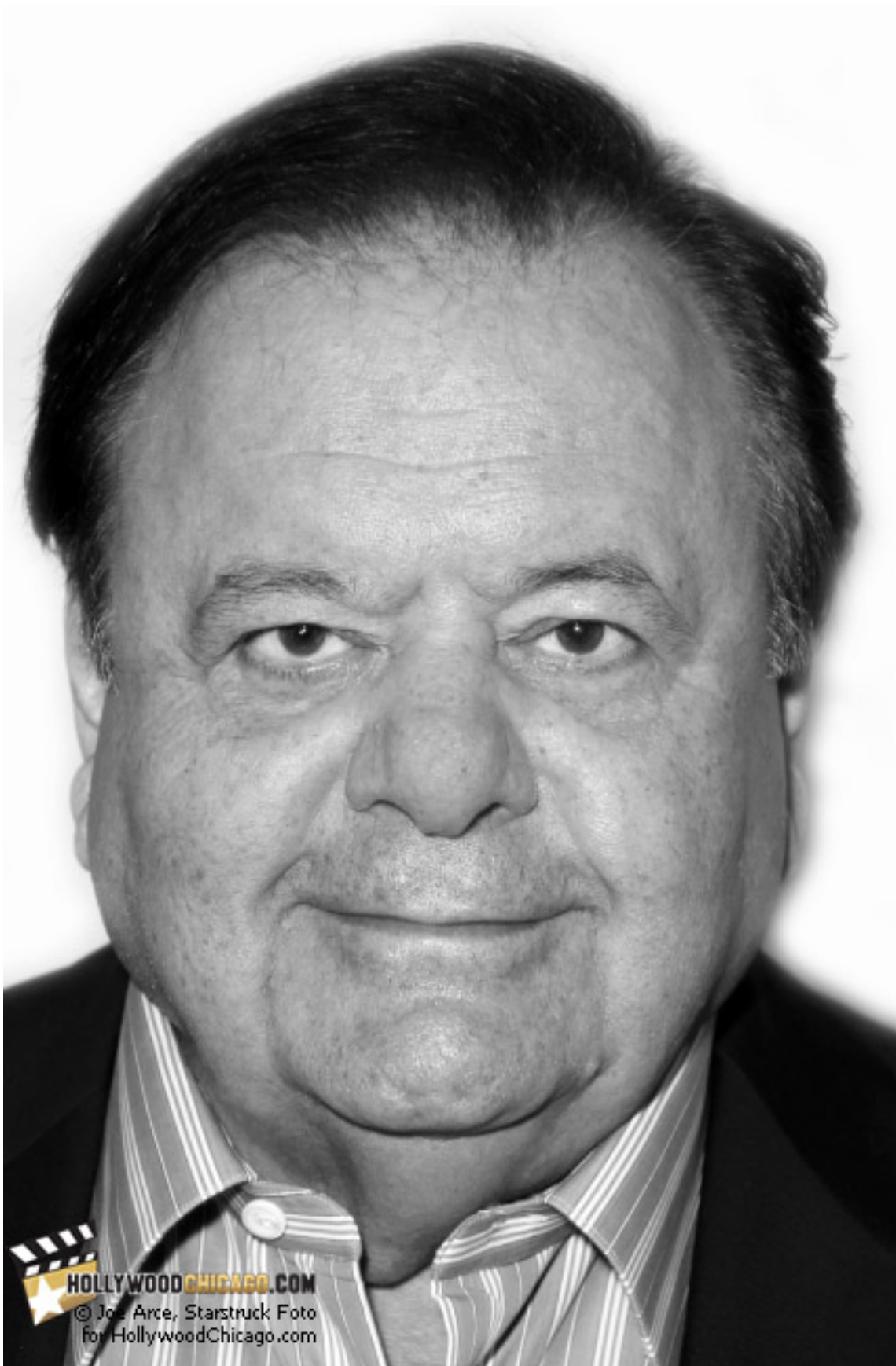
In Memoriam: Actor Paul Sorvino of ‘Goodfellas’ Dies at 83

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 28, 2022 - 10:48am

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CHICAGO – In one of my trips to New York City, I saw him in the distance on the street (this actually happens often in NYC. Pay attention!). Actor Paul Sorvino, Paulie Cicero of ‘Goodfellas’ legend, as well as many other films/stage/TV/opera work, was unmistakably walking right towards me. “Hey Paulie,” I instinctively said. “Hey,” he said back. Fast forward several years later, Mr. Sorvino was honored by the Chicago Film Critics Awards in 2013, I was a newly minted Chicago Film Critic, and I met him again (see below). Paul Sorvino died on July 25th, 2022, in Jacksonville, Florida. He was 83.

Paul Anthony Sorvino was born in Brooklyn, and studied at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy. After a stint in advertising, he made his Broadway debut in 1964 in the musical “Bajour.” Six years later, his was in his first film, Carl Reiner’s “Where’s Poppa” (1970), and one year later had a prominent supporting role for “The Panic in Needle Park.” Through the years, his films varied from “A Touch of Class” (1973), “Oh God” (1977), “Reds” (1981), “That Championship Season” (1982, in a role he originated on Broadway) and of course “Goodfellas” (1990).



Paul Sorvino in Chicago, Circa 2013

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

He worked in film pretty much to the end, with notable post-Goodfella roles in “Nixon” (1995), “Bulworth” (1998), “The Cooler” (2003), six films in 2016, and his final film role in “The Birthday Cake” in 2021. On TV, he was the main character in the sitcom “We’ll Get By” (1975) and did a stint on “Law & Order” (1991-92). Recently, he appeared as Ben Goldberg, father of Murray, in “The Goldbergs.” He helped to found the American Stage Company in 1986, which produced a number of successful Off-Broadway plays, and sang opera (he was a tenor). He was also a sculptor of note and a pasta sauce entrepreneur.

At the 2013 Chicago Critics Film Awards, I asked him a couple of questions (and later was able to relate our street encounter). When I asked him about the craft of acting, he said .. “I study the way people behave, the way they look, how they sound and how they behave. If you really want to be a good actor you have to find out what makes people tick. When I did Paulie Cicero, for example, I found out what he wants, what he does on a daily basis and what is important to him. That tells us something about his behavior. You don’t try to do anything but make it look like what you think it should look like, when you feel you know you have the character...and then you’re ready to go to work. Playing Paulie Cicero took me about a month.”



Paul Sorvino as Paulie Cicero in ‘Goodfellas’
Photo credit: Warner Home Video

He concluded with “Part of the actor’s tools is his child-like belief in things. Any fine artist retains his simplicity from childhood, he has to believe completely when he creating character, like a child using his finger as a gun. The actor’s work is different from any other artist because you have to believe in imaginary circumstances. As [famous acting instructor] Sanford Meisner once said when I studied under him, ‘you must find the pinch that will give you the ouch.’”

Paul Sorvino is survived by his wife Dee Dee Benkle and three children, including Oscar winning actor Mira Sorvino.

Source for this article was Wikipedia. Paul Sorvino, 1939-2022.



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