

HIDDEN FIGURES

ABOUT THE PRODUCTON

“Yes, they let women do some things at NASA...”

HIDDEN FIGURES uncovers the incredible, untold yet true story of a brilliant group of women who changed the foundations of the country for the better -- by aiming for the stars. The film recounts the vital history of an elite team of black female mathematicians at NASA who helped win the all-out space race against America’s rivals in the Soviet Union and, at the same time, sent the quest for equal rights and opportunity rocketing forwards.

Everyone knows about the Apollo missions. We can all immediately list the bold male astronauts who took those first giant steps for humankind in space: John Glenn, Alan Shepard and Neil Armstrong. Yet, remarkably, Katherine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson’s are names not taught in school or even known to most people -- even though their daring, smarts and powerful roles as NASA’s ingenious “human computers” were indispensable to advances that allowed for human space flight.

At last, the story of a visionary trio of women who crossed gender, race and professional lines on their way to pioneering cosmic travel comes to the screen starring Oscar®-nominee Taraji P. Henson (*Empire, Benjamin Button, Hustle And Flow*), Academy Award® winner Octavia Spencer (*Allegiant, Fruitvale Station, The Help*), singer Janelle Monáe making her motion picture debut and two time Oscar® winner Kevin Costner (*Black Or White, Field Of Dreams, Dancing With Wolves*).

Director Theodore Melfi (*St. Vincent*) brings the women’s rise to the top ranks of aerospace in the thrilling early days of NASA to life via a fast-moving, humor-filled, inspiring entertainment that illuminates both the gutsy quest for Earth’s first, seemingly impossible orbital flight and also the powerful things that can result when women unite.

For all its joys and triumphs, *Hidden Figures* is also a film that takes place at the crossroads of the most defining struggles in American history: the evolving fight for Civil Rights; the battle to win the high-stakes Cold War without risking nuclear war and be the first superpower to establish a human presence outside planet Earth; and the ongoing drive to show how the mind-boggling technological breakthroughs that create the world’s future have nothing to do with gender or background.

Says Melfi: “This story takes place at the collision of the Cold War, the space race, the Jim Crow south, and the birth of the Civil Rights movement. It is incredible territory for a rich and powerful story few people know about at all.”

Adds Taraji P. Henson: “Now we know there were amazing women behind how John Glenn came to orbit the earth in space -- we finally get to hear their story.”

Touchingly, Katherine G. Johnson, now in her 90s, finds the growing fascination with her life's work and that of her fellow compatriots a surprise as she says she was always just doing her best for her job, her family and her community, as she believes anybody would. "I was just solving problems that needed to be solved," she says with characteristic modesty.

As for what she advises people facing challenges today, Johnson says: "Stick with it. No matter the problem, it can be solved. A woman can solve it -- and a man can too, if you give him a lot of time."

Fox 2000 Pictures Presents A Chernin Entertainment / Levantine Films Production, *Hidden Figures*, directed by Theodore Melfi from a screenplay by Allison Schroeder and Melfi, based on the book by Margot Lee Shetterly. The producers are Donna Gigliotti, Peter Chernin, Jenno Topping, Pharrell Williams and Theodore Melfi and the executive producers are Jamal Daniel, Renee Witt, Ivana Lombardi, Mimi Valdés, Kevin Halloran and Shetterly.

Joining Henson, Spencer, Monáe and Costner is a cast that includes Emmy nominated Mahershala Ali (*Free State Of Jones, House Of Cards*), Emmy nominated Kirsten Dunst (*Fargo, Spiderman, Mona Lisa Smile*), four time Emmy winner Jim Parsons (*The Big Bang Theory, The Normal Heart*) and Kimberly Quinn (*St. Vincent, Gypsy*). The behind-the-scenes creative team includes director of photography Mandy Walker (*Jane Got A Gun, Australia*), production designer Wynn Thomas (*Grudge Match, Cinderella Man, A Beautiful Mind*), editor Peter Teschner (*St. Vincent, Identity Thief*), costume designer Renée Erlich Kalfus (*Annie, Friends With Benefits, Chocolat*) and composers Hans Zimmer, Pharrell Williams and Benjamin Wallfisch.

Meet NASA's "Human Computers"

Few accomplishments in American history have been as celebrated as the nation's space program and those first soaringly idealistic journeys to take humankind into the cosmos we'd contemplated since history's dawn. President Kennedy has been hailed for galvanizing the country to dream big; the astronauts who flew the perilous early flights into the unknown have become icons; and the meticulous male NASA engineers at mission control have been lauded for their grit and tenacity under pressure.

Yet there remain unsung and unlikely heroes of the space race – particularly, a team of female mathematicians who blazed multiple trails, trails towards greater diversity in science, equality in America, for human mathematical achievement and to launch John Glenn into mesmerizing orbit at more than 17,000 miles per hour as he circled three times around the globe in space.

It was a time in the country when opportunities could seem unjustly limited – that was true if you were a woman, if you were African-American, and *especially* if you were an African-American woman. Yet these dazzlingly smart NASA women flouted the limitations without fanfare, redefining the entire idea

of what was possible – and who is vital to the nation -- by proving themselves absolutely essential to America’s future.

For Katherine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson, the chance to use their knowledge, passion and skills opened up just as the demands of World War II were shifting the nation’s social fabric. On the factory front, women were suddenly invited to become Rosie the Riveters. Less famously, the same thing was happening in science and math. Faced with a daunting shortage of male scientists and mathematicians and with new laws prohibiting racial discrimination, defense contractors and Federal Agencies began seeking out women and African-Americans with the skills to keep pushing essential research onwards.

Director Theodore Melfi explains: “For NASA, at that moment in time, brains were more important than race or sex. These were brilliant women who could do the math they needed, who were hungry for a chance, who really wanted the opportunity to change their lives – so who else were they going to turn to?”

At the Langley Memorial Research Lab in Hampton, Virginia – run by the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics, or NACA, a precursor to NASA -- the search was on for luminous minds from nonconventional backgrounds. They needed gifted people to serve as “human computers” – that is those rare people with the grey matter to complete rapid-fire, advanced calculations in their minds, before we had digital super computers that could precisely plot out rocket trajectories and re-entry paths.

The stakes felt high to all Americans. In 1958, the Soviet Union launched their pioneering Sputnik satellite with a bang – claiming they now had the superior edge in the raging Cold War between the two nations. This catapulted the space race into the number one U.S. priority and preoccupation. Millions watched the race unfold, hoping America would be able to prove its strength as a society by beating the Russians into orbit and all the way to the moon. In a time when fear of a hot, civilization-annihilating nuclear war was at a high, the space race became an alternate path for the USSR and the U.S. to compete no holds barred. Both nations saw it as a chance to prove their system had the greater potential, as well as to reap new military and intelligence-gathering benefits, and become the first country to establish a sphere of influence beyond our globe. By 1960, John F. Kennedy was running for President on an inspiring platform of closing the gap in the space race and taking the lead with American ingenuity.

Recalls Katherine G. Johnson of Sputnik: “All our engineers were mad somebody else did it first. But what most people didn’t know was that we were right behind the Russians and we were ready.”

It was in this context, that NACA became NASA and all of its scientists and mathematicians, including the “human computers,” shifted into the space program at high velocity.

Despite the Jim Crow laws still undermining equality and human rights in Virginia, Langley hired an entirely female team of these “human computers,” a number of whom were African American math teachers. They remained segregated, with black women eating in separate quarters and working apart in a remote division known as West Computing. They were paid less than their white counterparts. Yet, their

extraordinary work rose above – and ultimately so won over the men in their midst that they became utterly indispensable to the boldest mission yet: putting John Glenn into full orbit around earth.

Even before NASA saw their untapped genius, these were astonishingly special women:

- Johnson was a West Virginia phenom who started high school at 10 and had graduated with degrees in Mathematics and French at 18 before becoming one of the first to integrate the graduate school at West Virginia University, starting at Langley in 1953. While she was working for NASA, she was also a single mother raising three children
- Vaughan was equally accomplished, a Missourian who graduated from college at 19 and worked as a math teacher before joining Langley in 1943. She quickly became the head of the West Computing group.
- Jackson was a local from Hampton, Virginia with degrees in Physical Science and Mathematics. She rose to Aerospace Engineer after joining Langley in 1951, specializing in wind tunnel experiments and aircraft data, always using her position to help others.

As special as they were, the women took their accomplishments in stride. For Johnson, it seemed normal to possess extraordinary math skills, because they came to her organically from a very young age. “Almost as soon as I was born, I loved to count things,” she remembers. “I was always counting the stairs, and we had a lot of stairs so I got a lot of experience. I saw that counting was a way to understand things better, to see what things were and what they meant.”

Even at NASA, Johnson felt driven first and foremost by her curiosity about the world, and never drew attention to herself as a heroine. “I approached it as: if someone asked me to solve a problem, I did it,” she states matter-of-factly. “But I always wanted to know more about the importance of what we were doing. If we were doing a calculation, I wanted to know: What is this for? Why is it vital?”

As for leading a triple life as a mother raising children, an African American woman navigating Jim Crow laws and as a major asset for NASA, Johnson says she never felt she wasn’t up to the task. “A woman can always outdo a man in managing multiple things at once, so it was no problem,” she muses. “And at NASA, we were all working toward the same goal, whether we knew it or not.”

It stunned author and executive producer Margot Lee Shetterly, whose father worked at NASA, that these women remained relatively unknown. Shetterly wrote her novel Hidden Figures based on oral interviews, extensive research and archival information, chronicling how the women of West Computing met the challenges that faced them with grace and optimism, forged alliances that helped them gain respect and aided one another to change their own lives even as they were changing the country and technology forever. She also founded the Human Computer Project, which has received two grants from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, an organization dedicated to archiving the work of all the women who contributed to the early history of NASA.

She was especially moved by how the women themselves downplayed what they faced. Says Shetterly: “These women were hidden in plain sight in a way. They felt they had a chance to do jobs they loved – and they loved this challenging math -- so they didn’t draw attention to themselves.”

But now is the time to draw attention to these women, Shetterly believes. “In the past, we’ve been blind-sighted about women in technology,” she comments. “We have this image of what an astronaut or a scientist looks like, and since these women did not fit the profile, historians often looked past them.”

Shetterly set out to give the women their full due in her book. One thing Shetterly wanted to get across is how much these women could do with pencils and sheer brainpower. “There’s more computing power in a toaster today than was available in the 1960s,” laughs Shetterly, “yet we were able to send a man into space, then to the moon. That is because raw computing power came from these women.”

Especially inspiring to Shetterly was how the women navigated clashing realities – as high-level minds on the one hand and as African Americans confronted with daily institutional bias on the other. “It must have been something to be so into your work, so fascinated by these big mathematical problems -- and then you have to go use the ‘colored bathroom,’” she muses. “Then you come back and still have to hold your head high, despite having your status as a second-class citizen pointed out again and again.”

Bonding closely together helped the women find strength, says Shetterly. “They were a band of sisters. They knew they had to support each other and they encouraged each other to give 150% because they also knew they were going to be scrutinized in a different way. I think they saw they had a rare chance to open doors to other black women in a future that would be different,” she concludes.

Now, there has been a burst of fascination with NASA’s women, especially as efforts to recruit more women into STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields take off. “A number of people did historical work and published articles in the past,” notes the film’s NASA consultant Bill Barry. “But it didn’t catch on with the public imagination until now. Now there’s a growing interest now in how we can really encourage women to follow their passions in science, engineering and math.”

When the manuscript crossed Academy Award®-winning producer Donna Gigliotti’s desk, she too was shaken by the women’s hidden status and stirred by all they had accomplished at a time when their achievements went unrecognized. “We develop a lot of material – but this story was so unique,” says Gigliotti. “It’s a part of history that needed to be heard, and I knew this was a movie I had to make.”

Launching The Project

Donna Gigliotti quickly found that no one she spoke with about the film project had any clue of the existence of a pool of female math whizzes at NASA. “It’s mind boggling that so few people know this story. However, I want to say this: the information was all there,” she points out, “but it has taken several generations for Katherine, Dorothy and Mary to get the public credit they’ve long been due.”

Gigliotti struck out in search of a woman writer to take this obscured story all the way to the screen, and was exhilarated to find one with a remarkably matched background: Allison Schroeder, who not only studied high-level math but interned at NASA, following in the wake of her grandmother, a programmer at NASA from the early days through the shuttle program, and grandfather, who took part in the Mercury project.

Much as Schroeder knew about NASA history, she, too, had never encountered the names of Katherine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson. She couldn't believe this inspiring story of women's empowerment in the world of space science had been buried out of her sight, even as an insider.

"I did know about the 'human computers' at NASA, but I honestly never had heard there was a separate African-American pool of computers," explains Schroeder. "By the time my grandmother began working there, it was already more integrated. I did know a lot of women worked at NASA. I remember NASA came to our school in the 8th grade and recruited women and minorities for internships. That's how I got involved in NASA and in math and science. So, I knew NASA was big on including everyone."

NASA's first big shot at inclusion -- and how Johnson, Vaughan and Jackson fought with their hearts, minds and souls to make it work -- came to the fore of Schroeder's screenplay, which spotlighted the women's friendship and teamwork. Despite the heady topic, the humanity and humor of the story instantly spurred interest.

Gigliotti recalls that early on, Octavia Spencer, who plays Dorothy Vaughan, and Pharrell Williams, who serves as a producer, co-composer and songwriter, came aboard, galvanizing things further. "Octavia had gotten hold of the script and said she had to be part of the movie. Meanwhile, Pharrell got in touch to say he would do anything to join the project. He told me, 'This happened ten miles from where I grew up. I am obsessed with space and a big proponent of the STEM initiative as well.' So Pharrell and Octavia came in early and they hung in," says Gigliotti.

Like Gigliotti, Williams could not believe the African American women who helped bring triumph to NASA had yet to be celebrated in popular culture. He saw the story as having an inherent power to break down perceptions and move people of all backgrounds.

"The empowerment you get from this story is just remarkable, and it's not fiction," Williams says. "These women changed the world with their incredible minds -- and that is a leading example of what empowerment is. Katherine thought to herself: what obstacles? Because in her mind, there was an equation for everything. We needed people like that then and we need them as much now."

Williams continues: "I've been obsessed with NASA since I was a little boy growing up nearby, so this story really had everything for me -- it's about science, it's about amazing women, it's about African-American women, it's about the 60s and it's about space. I had to be part of that."

He is especially thankful to Gigliotti for bringing the material to the world. "This story has been around for 50 years, but no one else saw the light until Donna saw it," says Williams.

Williams is excited for today's audiences to have the chance to meet Katherine G. Johnson. "She is someone who while surrounded by the darkness of the past, saw the future. She saw a future where woman superseded all expectations and were equally valued – and the sooner we all see that, I think the better our planet will be," he sums up.

Next, the search was on for a director who could turn slide rulers, equations and mathematical virtuosity into the stuff of dynamic drama. Deeply moved by the script, Theodore Melfi, who drew accolades with the Golden Globe-nominated comic-drama *St. Vincent* starring Bill Murray, fought to take the helm. He was up at the time for the potentially blockbuster *Spiderman*, but chose to have his name taken out of the running purely in order to pursue *Hidden Figures*.

Gigliotti recalls: "Ted said, 'This film is too important and everyone should know this story.' He had such a high level of passion, he turned away other opportunities. He's a man of real integrity."

Melfi brought aboard trusted partners in renowned media executive Peter Chernin and Jenno Topping of Chernin Entertainment, the team who had produced *St. Vincent* (and most recently produced Tim Burton's *Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children*). Topping says they saw the film as exactly the kind of project Chernin Entertainment wants to champion and a compelling fit for Melfi's talents.

"I think Ted is drawn, and we are drawn, to stories of unlikely or unrecognized heroes," says Topping. "*St. Vincent* is a film about everyday heroism, but obviously this story was different. These women are hugely accomplished in their field -- but the larger world hasn't heard this story yet. I think Ted is also a filmmaker who has a deep interest in humanism and this is a story that shows both the very best of humans as well as the darker side."

Topping continues: "*Hidden Figures* really is a perfect balance of the inspirational, the historical, the humorous and the moving – it runs the full gamut of emotions. And that's what audiences want more than anything: to be entertained and informed but also inspired and uplifted. It's a story that feels like its moment has come. People were drawn to it so strongly that it was an unusually fast process. We wrapped production less than a year after beginning to put the picture together."

Perhaps the most imperative reason behind Melfi's passion for *Hidden Figures* is that he is the father of two daughters. "I try to tell my daughters everyday that you can do anything on the planet you want to do if you put your heart and soul into it – and that includes math and science," Melfi explains. "I want them to know you have real value and you can create a satisfying life for yourself with your brains. I felt this was a chance to let girls know they can aspire to be a Katherine Johnson."

Right away, Melfi knew the approach he wanted to take: "I wanted the film to explore the part of the story which is not documented at all, which is what it was like for three African-American women to be working in segregated NASA even as all these accomplishments were taking place," he says. "I love the double meaning of the title because so often women have only been looked at as superficial 'figures,' rather than as great figures. But these women were the literal hidden figures that changed the space race."

He also hoped to re-create a more optimistic time in America when people aimed at breaking through barriers with a sense of belief. “At that time, there was a real sense of national pride surrounding the space race and President Kennedy appealed to everyone to push the envelope. He spoke to the innate urge in all of us to find out if there’s something more, something better,” says Melfi.

Jenno Topping was especially excited to see Melfi working with such a big, diverse cast of veterans and newcomers who bring the characters to life in their vivid nuances. “Ted really loves actors, he understands actors, and I think this cast was such a fun playground for him to work in, and he really went all the way with them,” she says.

Throughout, Melfi consulted closely with NASA and NASA historians. Although he was not setting out in any sense to create a documentary, he did want the film’s fictionalized drama to reflect the spirit of the early space pioneers from all walks of life. “NASA was fantastic and indispensable, especially with the getting the science right. They were incredibly supportive of the project,” he says.

Most of all, Melfi felt the story would resonate with audiences looking for an inspiring vision of a future that includes everyone in America pulling to reach our biggest goals. Says Melfi: “In this story, you see how skill and knowledge are equalizers. During the space race, when we put everything aside and said, ‘whatever race or sex you are, whatever background you have, if you can do the math, please help us get to the moon’ something amazing happened. People were valued for their talents and in turn gave their country valuable and precious gifts.”

He concludes: “A country divided along any lines can accomplish little, but a country united and inspired to work together can achieve the very best.”

That became a foundational theme as Melfi steered the production – as did the idea of sisterhood. “These women were so individually talented, but they rose together, standing with each other, and that’s what’s so beautiful,” concludes Melfi. “They empowered one another and everyone won because of that.”

Taraji P. Henson On Playing An Unknown Legend

Just as quickly as the script for *Hidden Figures* began making the Hollywood rounds it also began resonating with leading actresses, including several Donna Gigliotti had originally envisioned taking key roles. Ultimately a trio came together who were each committed to immersing themselves into the utterly different lives and times of the film’s mathematicians turned space pioneers.

Leading the threesome is Taraji P. Henson, who has been rapidly rising in roles that include her Oscar®-nominated turn as adoptive mother Queenie in David Fincher’s *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* and equally her Golden Globe, Emmy-nominated and buzz-generating role as the powerhouse hip-hip mogul’s wife, Cookie Lyon, on television’s mega-hit *Empire*.

Henson is joined by Octavia Spencer, who garnered an Oscar®, Golden Globe, BAFTA and countless other honors for her pivotal role as outspoken maid Minny Jackson in *The Help* and has since been seen in wide-ranging roles from the hard-hitting drama *Fruitvale* and the sci-fi thriller *Snowpiercer* to the animated *Zootopia*. Completing the group is an exciting newcomer: Janelle Monáe, best known for her career as a six-time Grammy-nominated pop star, debuting this year in both Barry Jenkins' *Moonlight* and *Hidden Figures*.

Henson takes great pride in bringing to the fore for the first time the life of Katherine G. Johnson – the number-genius who helped calculate key trajectories for John Glenn's orbit around the earth and the 1969 Apollo flight to the Moon -- and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2015. The role struck her as both an unexpected next move and also, in an exciting way, as a bit unnerving. Indeed, finding her way into Johnson's mix of ease with astronomical numbers and organic defiance of societal barriers has been the biggest challenge of her career to date.

She relished just that. "I'm a girl who grew up in the 'hood," she notes, "so all I ever had was dreams. And when you come from a place where many people feel they have no hope and all you see is that people who look just like you seem to have no place in society, that can be overwhelming. Maybe if I had known women like this existed when I was growing up, I would have wanted to become a rocket scientist. Not to say I don't love what I'm doing – but there's so much important work to be done in the world and I was so excited to be part of a project that might give kids growing up in places like where I grew up a different vision of what they can be."

Henson goes on: "So I felt honored just to have this chance to portray a woman like Katherine. There was a flood of emotions surrounding that – and there was also fear because I am not that mathematically wired. But I think that so scared me, I felt I had to do it. I couldn't say no."

Most of all, she felt stirred by Johnson's refusal to let her circumstances knock her off course. "It was as if Katherine had every obstacle stacked against her, and yet nothing at all could stop her. That was one of her gifts and that is her legacy," notes Henson.

It does strike Henson that ex-con Cookie Lyons and space hero Katherine G. Johnson could not be any more different, other than both being complex women – but she was excited to explore such a different side of the American experience. "I was so honored that the filmmakers thought of me to take this role. They saw past Cookie and saw that I am interested in doing other things and I'm grateful for that," she says. "Once I took the role, I really quickly shed Cookie and jumped into Katherine's world."

Donna Gigliotti observes: "Cookie and Katherine are apples and oranges. But Taraji is so smart, so funny and so compelling to watch – that's why she was able to step into this completely different role."

Adds Jenno Topping: "It never felt like a risk to cast Taraji because she always felt like Katherine to us. Ted wanted her from the beginning – and you can see that she is an actor at the top of her game right now. Also, her passion for the project was just infectious."

Still, Johnson's aura preceded her. Says NASA consultant Bill Barry of Johnson's numerical wizardry: "Katherine had a facility with mathematics that boggles the mind. It quickly became apparent after she was hired in 1953 that she had very unusual talents. So when the Space Task Group formed, she was pulled in because they required the very best of the best. And she was a force to be reckoned with."

Although NASA had just begun using cutting-edge IBM computers, John Glenn specifically requested Johnson to recheck the calculations by hand before his orbital flight aboard Friendship 7. She was that good. Glenn refused to even think about risking a trip into space until her figures came back.

Henson hoped to express not only Johnson's beautiful mind but her ceaseless energy and positivity. "It was the early 60s and there was racism and sexism everywhere, no doubt. Yet here is this woman who didn't let any of that hold her back," say Henson. "We don't have enough images for girls of women like this, black or white. We just don't and I think it's so important."

Johnson is at last being recognized. On May 5, 2016, the Katherine G. Johnson Computational Research Facility was dedicated at Langley Research Center. The date was the 55th anniversary of Alan Shepard's historic rocket launch and splash down, which Johnson helped make possible.

Henson, who met with the nonagenarian heroine to talk about her experiences, believes a big part of Johnson's drive was not so much having her own chance to shine but the even more rare chance to raise others up. "When I met Katherine she told me that one of her professors once said, 'I am sick and tired of you asking questions when I know you know the answers.' Katherine's response was, 'Well, I know these six students around me don't know the answer and I want them to understand it the way that I do.' That is an incredible person who thinks that way," Henson comments.

Melfi saw a reflection of Johnson's determination in Henson. "Taraji has that same ability as Katherine to tackle something in a fast, precise way, which she did with this role," he says. "She was in her hotel room learning math and she would come to the set and just be ready to do it. She did a tremendous job of creating a very contained performance and really put herself in Katherine's shoes."

Adds Pharrell Williams: "Taraji is a wizard of emotions. She's able to take herself in just two seconds flat somewhere very deep."

For Johnson, Henson notes, there was no question of whether she was up to the high-stakes work of NASA. "When you talk to Katherine about the bias of the times, she takes the tone of 'that's just how it was.' For her, you got on with it, you did your job, and you did what would hopefully bring change. And that was the huge opportunity she got at the Space Task Group. They didn't care who she was if she could get them the numbers they needed. She was part of a larger human goal and that meant a lot."

Perhaps the most moving element for Henson is the camaraderie of the women at West Computing – their desire to bring each other along for this amazing ride. "What struck me talking to Katherine is that she never takes sole credit," concludes Henson. "She only uses the words 'we' and 'us.' That's when you

know someone has a true gift to give the world – when it’s not about you but about your ability to use what you have to reach others. She understood her purpose. To this day she is very clear.”

Octavia Spencer On Playing a Matriarch Of NASA Women

Like Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer felt a magnetic attraction to playing Dorothy Vaughan, in part because she couldn’t believe her astonishing story isn’t more widely known. “I was drawn to the fact that we haven’t known about the contributions these brilliant NASA women made to our advancement and to the space race. That so intrigued to me,” says Spencer. “Whenever I choose a role, it has to be something that I’m intrigued by or enlightens me in some way. This movie had both of those combined.”

She goes on: “This movie is set in such an interesting time for our country, when it was redefining itself into what we are now. And the beautiful thing of looking back at history, as this film does, is contemplating how we can influence the future. I’m really hopeful that after seeing this story, there will be girls in the world who will realize just how much value they have.”

One of Spencer’s favorite lines that she delivers as Dorothy Vaughan is: “*No one can tell you that you’re better than anyone else, and nobody can tell you that you’re less than anyone else.*”

“I definitely came from humble beginnings,” notes Spencer, “and one thing my mother drummed into us is that your station in life doesn’t dictate your path in life. So to have Dorothy say something so similar to what I’ve always been taught ... well, I knew that I was definitely playing the right woman.”

Vaughan, who passed away in 2008, continued to work with NASA for most of her life. As soon as newfangled IBM computers arrived on the scene, it was Vaughan who sensed a brave new era in the making and quickly changed gears, specializing in electronic computing and FORTRAN programming, making herself and her co-workers indispensable. Among the women of West Computing, she was seen as a leader and Katherine G. Johnson called her the smartest woman she ever met.

“Dorothy was by all accounts a saintly woman. People loved her,” says Donna Gigliotti. “To this day, Katherine talks about Dorothy in a way that tells you how important she was to her.”

Adds Theodore Melfi: “Dorothy was the matriarch of this group of women – she helped a lot of them get their positions and she really took care of them. She never could become an official supervisor because of the politics of the time, but she played that role anyway.”

Jenno Topping notes that Spencer seemed to embrace all of that organically. “She opened herself so fully to this project,” says Topping.

Spencer felt the weight of trying to bring the woman who earned that kind of respect to life with a resonant truth. She tried to give herself over to the spirit of Dorothy’s persona. “This is my second time playing a person who really existed, and I did feel it was important to really capture her personal integrity.

I wanted Dorothy Vaughan to be remembered by her own actions, so I approached it thinking I'm just the vessel through which the world will be able to see all that Dorothy contributed," Spencer explains.

She continues: "Dorothy was also very selfless and I think because of that extreme selflessness it was hard for her to gain her place as quickly as Katherine and Mary did. At the same time, she really believed in women and she made sure that every step forward for her was a step forward for all of them."

For Spencer, the fullness of the role – allowing Vaughan to be both staggeringly talented and humanly complicated – was itself a rare joy. "It's so wonderful to get to play a strong woman, but I'm appreciative that each of these women are also allowed to have their vulnerabilities," she comments.

Like Henson, Spencer loved finding communion with her cast mates. "This is a movie about sisterhood," she says. "Teamwork was so important at NASA and for these women, anything that any one person did affected the entire community. So we had to embody that together."

Spencer credits Melfi with keeping the cast bolstered and connected with his overriding vision of the film. "Ted came to the set having explored this story inside and out, and his exuberance was felt in every element," she summarizes. "He's truly one of the most collaborative people I've known. And it was really moving to know that this film has an extra importance to him because he has daughters and he understands why it's so essential that we tell stories that give young girls a sense of their worth."

Janelle Monáe On A Taking a Major Screen Role

Best known for her futuristic pop star persona, Janelle Monáe was an out-of-the-box choice to play Mary Jackson, but the filmmakers thought it was a chance worth taking. "We were all aware that it was going to be a leap for her to take this on as a first major role [Monáe also appears this year in *Moonlight*], but Janelle has such a fantastic personality. And when we tested her, we saw she has tremendous charisma on screen, a dynamism that you can't deny," says Donna Gigliotti.

"She has so much fire," says Theodore Melfi. "She's vibrant as Mary. You can see her saying something in every moment just with her body language—and that is so fun to watch. To me, she has the feel of a glamorous 40s movie star."

Like her cast mates, Monáe was fueled by the hope of doing the women of West Computing justice. "To be part of telling this history was so motivating to me," she says. "These women literally changed the world by allowing the first astronaut to orbit earth. From the time I received the script and was asked to audition, there was nothing more important to me than taking on the role of Mary Jackson."

Once she got the part, Monáe dove into her preparation with gusto. "I did a lot of research on Mary. She's passed on, but her spirit still lives," she says. "Even though I never had the chance to speak to her

she has definitely spoken to my heart. I saw her as someone who wants fairness. She knows she is smart and she is not going to belittle herself or dim her light to make anybody feel comfortable.”

For Melfi, the casting of Henson, Spencer and Monáe opened up all the doors he needed to allow audiences to get to know these women nearly lost to history on a personal level. “Taraji seems so against type, but she’s so fresh in this role; Octavia shows not only genius in her craft, but also in her humor; and as a newcomer, Janelle was just impressive,” he sums up.

The ensemble nature of the performances brought an additional layer for each of the leads to excavate. “I love the relationships between these women,” comments Henson, “with Mary and Dorothy always bickering and Katherine being the quiet observer in the background. I love that they accept each other for who they are. It’s rare that you see a movie where you have three female friends, particularly African Americans, who love and support each other like you see here.”

Kevin Costner on Wrangling The Space Task Group

It is the Space Task Group Leader -- the perpetually energetic, gum-chewing, glasses-cleaning Al Harrison -- who tells his NASA engineers in the heat of the moment: “*We all get there together – or we don’t get there at all.*” Taking the role of Harrison, a fictional character based on a composite of several real leaders at NASA, is Academy Award®-winning actor and filmmaker Kevin Costner.

“Kevin plays a key figure at NASA who’s based on several people, including the administrator of NASA at the time, James Webb,” explains director Melfi. “These were guys who were highly motivated to get Americans into space – and they were interested more in numbers and science than anything else. For them, anyone who could do the work that would get a man into and out of orbit safely was welcome.”

Melfi continues: “We were very excited to have Kevin join us because he brings such generosity with his talent and his spirit. He already has that kind of infectious personality that creates a team instantly, which matched the character. He really comes to work to be of service – to his fellow cast members, to the character he’s creating, and to the story. To me, he can do no wrong.”

Costner gravitated to the script instantaneously. As with others, the story knocked him for a loop. “What is amazing is that we know the United States was built by the skill of extraordinary people, but the people who gave so much haven’t always received the public attention they’re due,” he observes. “These women might not have their names everywhere but they were of major consequence to the space program, to real people’s lives and really to all of us.”

He was intrigued to enter a world few outsiders ever really get to see – the back rooms where the real work of NASA took place before any spectacular takeoffs or journeys to the stars could follow. “Scientists and engineers are a different breed,” Costner notes. “So the key for this role was really

understanding what Al Harrison was up against: trying to get the best and brightest minds at NASA all working together on an idea that no one knew for sure would work. There was only the idea that we had to get into space but he had to figure out how to get all these different people to focus on that one goal.”

Costner realized it could not have been easy. “The reality is, when you put a lot of talented scientists in one room, they can be very individualistic and aren’t necessarily going to all get along. A lot of scientists are so immersed in what they’re doing, they can be myopic, and not see other people. So someone like Harrison not only has to come up with ways to tackle and solve mathematical problems, he also has to deal with the human elements of jealousy and fatigue and bias,” he explains.

One motivation was beating the USSR, which at the height of nuclear brinksmanship, was hugely significant. “A lot of it came down to good, old-fashioned competition,” notes Costner.

As for why Al Harrison takes a chance on Katherine despite the Jim Crow laws and other barriers, Costner says it would have been a no-brainer. “Al is so goal oriented, he does what needs to be done,” he says. “He needs a mathematician who can think differently than anyone in the room. So is he surprised that it is an African-American woman who turns out to be the one? Yeah, he has that moment. But it really comes down to one question: Can you do this? He’s almost like a sports coach. He just needs to know that Katherine can play at a high level and he gets the answer he wants.”

Harrison is also the one who decides to tear down the sign that keeps the bathroom off-limits to African-Americans. “I think he’s saying: a new culture is going to be starting here,” says Costner. “It’s not a heroic act. These women were the real heroes, but he is just saying enough is enough. That’s not a sign the women could tear down, but he has that power, so he uses it.”

Costner relished the chance to work with Taraji P. Henson so closely. Taraji is a really good actress and she was really good for this movie,” he says. “Ted put a lot of faith in her and I can see why. There was a lot of trust between us right from the start and she gave a lot.”

Says Henson of Costner: “He blew my mind with all the subtle things he brought to his character. I had to remind myself to stay in the scene sometimes because I was so in awe of his work.”

Jim Parson and Kirsten Dunst on Paul Stafford and Vivian Mitchell

Kevin Costner’s Al Harrison relies on his lead engineer, Paul Stafford, to bring the work of the Space Task Group to fruition, but Stafford is facing his own internal struggle. Taking the key role is Jim Parsons, renown for his multiple Emmy Award-winning and Golden Globe-winning role as Sheldon Cooper in the long-running television hit *The Big Bang Theory*. Parsons also has received accolades for starring both on stage and on cable television in *The Normal Heart*, Larry Kramer’s lauded history of the HIV/AIDS crisis in early 1980s New York.

Director Melfi found that Parsons had a bead on the role from the day they started talking about it. “Jim said, ‘I want to be a guy who is scared to lose his job, who is a bit afraid of a woman appearing smarter than him or to be surpassing him.’ He based his whole performance on that fear -- and to me it was a genius characterization of a guy who is blinded by being desperately afraid for his own success. Once he took on the part, Jim just vanished into it. He disappeared and became this guy petrified of a woman at his desk.”

Parsons had a strong reaction to the script. “It’s an important piece and I don’t use that term lightly,” he says. “It reminded me of doing *The Normal Heart*, because it’s also based on real-life events and takes place during a very important time for our country. It’s about a triangle of things that are still very much with us: the idea of exploring space as a uniting human event, the playing out of the Civil Rights struggle and the issue of equality between the genders.”

As for Stafford, Parsons describes him as “someone who is very proud to be part of this patriotic mission.” Parsons continues: “He wants to do what needs to be done to get America back on top of the space race, but when he sees Katherine solving problems, he’s not thrilled she outshines him. That hurts his pride. But he up breaking through and he changes. I think he’s a great example of how you might not connect with somebody different from you until a common goal is suddenly shared. When you start accomplishing things together, suddenly you see all these commonalities. He’s forced to take Katherine seriously by necessity, but once he does, he sees all the gifts that she brings.”

Also joining the cast of *Hidden Figures* is two-time Golden Globe nominee Kirsten Dunst (*Spiderman* series, *Midnight Special*) in the role of NASA supervisor Vivian Mitchell, who oversees the “human computers” with an iron hand. Says Theodore Melfi: “Kirsten has a very challenging role in this because she represents some of the unconscious bias and prejudice of the times. Kirsten approached it in a very complex and subtle way, playing Vivian as someone who doesn’t want any other woman to get ahead because she feels threatened by that, and is largely unaware of her discriminatory behavior.”

Like her fellow actors, Dunst was shocked to hear for the first time about the women of NASA. “I had no idea there were human computers before there were electronic computers – and I had no idea there were women, black or white, doing this work, so I really wanted to be part of telling this story.”

Dunst notes that Vivian is herself in an unusual position as a woman given supervisory power – which she feels can be taken away at any moment, a pressure that hangs over everything she does. “She’s a female supervisor getting pressure from men to deliver and then she has to deal with the reality of a segregated system at that time and I think that pressure really builds in Vivian. It makes her very aggressive because she feels she could lose her position at any time,” Dunst observes.

She goes on: “She’s also a lonely person and I don’t think she necessarily wants to be a bully but that’s the position she feels she has been put in.”

Vivian is also a product of the Jim Crow South and follows the protocols of segregation as if it was ordinary – because it was at that time. To Dunst, the most important thing was to give the character her

due, despite the fact that at times she acts as a barrier to the film's heroines. "Vivian's the type of role that could be very cliché, to be honest. You could play her in a very one note kind of way, but I wanted to look inside her to make her more human," she concludes.

Math Boot Camp

Mathematicians and movies have long been strange bedfellows. Math is complicated, internal and not easily expressed visually. At the same time, those amazing humans who can see deeply into mathematical worlds off-limits to the rest of us can be utterly fascinating. *Hidden Figures* focuses on the lives of NASA's African-American women as they struggle to solve brain-twisting problems while also breaking down barriers – but it was also essential to get the numbers that meant so much to them right. After all, just one degree off in their equations could have meant unthinkable tragedy for NASA.

To oversee the film's mathematical equations and to prepare the cast for how mathematicians think, the filmmakers brought in consultant Rudy L. Horne, Ph.D., an Associate Professor of Mathematics at the historically black Morehouse College. Horne teaches a variety of courses at Morehouse College but his specialty is applied math, the branch that looks to solve problems in the real world.

Horne was taken by surprise at the invitation to join the production. "I never could have imagined consulting for a movie," he laughs, noting that it's not a common position for mathematicians. "But it's been a lot of fun, and I even learned some new math out of it."

Taraji Henson spent a lot of time studying with Horne and trying to wrap her mind around challenging numerical concepts and even solve equations. Though Henson once thought she wanted to be an engineer, she never had done anything like this before – and she had to confront and get past that fear of math. "It was difficult," she confesses. "But I also felt there are people who will watch this film who have made math their life and I better get it right. It was so hard, I wanted to cry some nights. But I had to do it because I am one of those people in the audience who would be unhappy if the math is wrong!"

The anxiety Henson felt about Horne's homework ultimately turned into the joy of mastery – something Henson thinks too many people never experience with math. "At first it brought back all these traumatic memories of getting a big fat F in pre-calculus," she laughs. "And when I first started doing these equations my heart would palpitate and I would sweat and worry I would be a failure. So I had to leap some personal hurdles for this role. But what happened is that I proved to myself I could start to at least memorize these numbers and equations very well, and understand some of it."

Producer Pharrell Williams hopes the film's energetic take on math's beauty, importance and ability to create exciting things will encourage more women and minorities to take the leap into a field they may not have considered. To him, it is just as awesome as becoming a singer, actor or filmmaker.

“The idea of STEM is very important to this film,” says Williams. “I consider math to be a real art and it’s also a universal language. It doesn’t even matter what solar system you’re in, math applies.”

A Hidden Side Of NASA: The Design

Hidden Figures takes audiences into a world they have never seen before – the remote, segregated arm of NASA known as West Computing, which co-existed with the Jim Crow South of Virginia in the early 1960s. To bring this hidden side of NASA and American history to life, director Theodore Melfi recruited a crack team of craftspersons led by director of photography Mandy Walker, production designer Wynn Thomas, editor Peter Teschner and costume designer Renée Kalfus.

“The look of the film captures something unexpected about the incredible beauty of these women and their house and their lives,” observes Jenno Topping. “It was all approached with enormous care, and Wynn, Renée and Mandy are just masters at their crafts.”

Melfi was especially excited to have the film shot by one of Hollywood’s still relatively rare female cinematographers. “I don’t understand why there are so few female DPs,” the director comments. “Mandy has such a brilliant aesthetic and eye for what is beautiful. She doesn’t need smoke and mirrors – she finds a natural, raw frame lit in the most stunningly, organic way.”

From the start, Walker and Melfi talked about iconic photographers of the period, particularly Saul Leiter, a pioneer of the so-called New York School of photography, which emphasized lush, colorful, humanistic street scenes. They also talked about a theme Melfi had in mind.

“For me, the word of this movie was ‘through.’ Everyone’s going through something. The women are going through obstacles of racism and sexism. The U.S. is going through space,” Melfi elaborates. “So we talked about using the camera to shoot through doorways, windows, through any and all objects. We set out to find beauty and emotion through things. We didn’t overdo it, but whenever we could, we approached things that way.”

Melfi and Walker also made the decision to shoot on celluloid film rather than digitally to befit the handcrafted era when the space program was still doing calculations on paper. It also gave Walker warm contrasts to work with. “I was really glad when Ted told me that he wanted to shoot on film,” says Walker. “We felt that it would handle the contrast of color and of light so beautifully.”

To add to the visual appeal of the period, Walker also utilized an array of vintage lenses. “We used older Series Panavision Anamorphic lenses and we also shot on old Kodak stock,” she explains.

Walker worked closely in synch with production designer Thomas. Says Thomas: “There was an incredible exchange of ideas on the look of the movie. We spent a lot of time looking at inspirational

photographs and talking about composition. And when you're shooting on film, you need a lot more light, so we need to really work closely to provide the light to support Mandy's wonderful photography."

Thomas, who also did the design for the mathematically-themed *A Beautiful Mind*, began his own work with intensive research. "I looked at endless photographs of NASA facilities from that era, as well as a variety of research material from people's homes," he says. "Part of what we wanted to do was not only define the times but also help define the characters by showing you their environments."

He acknowledges that the look of NASA's East and West Computing took liberties to create the film's compelling visuals. "We were not really trying to recreate NASA in precise details. We're trying to create the spirit of NASA at that time, which is a different thing," Thomas explains.

Thomas and Walker especially focused on creating the heady atmosphere of the Space Task Group, where Katherine Johnson is at last invited to enter the exclusive domain of the VIP aeronautic engineers. "By coming to the Space Task Group, Katherine's whole life changes, so we wanted to design the space to be a feel a bit larger than life, so that Katherine looks a little small and overwhelmed coming into this high-tech world that had previously seemed out of her reach."

Shooting in Atlanta, Thomas had the pleasure of using Morehouse College as the exterior of NASA's facilities. NASA had been designed to function like a college campus, so the filmmakers got a kick out of using one of the nation's oldest black universities to stand in its stead. Buildings featured in the film including the rounded Frederick Douglas Hall. "That circular building dominates the campus, so we decided to use it as the exterior of Space Task Group. The real Space Task Group was not in a circular environment, but it makes the space so visually interesting," notes Thomas.

Melfi was gratified by Thomas' contributions. "Everything Wynn touched was magic," he says. "You can really sense how much he cares in the level of detail he brings. Wynn really helped us play up the contrasts between the East and West Computing Groups. While East Computing is pristine, warm and bright West Computing is in a dingy basement and all hodge-podge equipment. The way Wynn created it though, it feels unconscious – just the way things were done then, without thinking about it."

Meanwhile costume designer Renée Kalfus was immersing herself in Southern fashions of the early 60s and translating that to the characters' personas. "It's an amazing experience to work on a film like this, where you have three incredible characters and a chance to really create each one's style," says Kalfus. "We used a real mix of things, hand making some outfit and also seeking out vintage pieces. I started just by looking at tons of clothing catalogues from that time. We got our hands on several Sears and Wards catalogues, as well as others from the period – and that was a great education."

For Katherine, it was essential to Kalfus that her clothes appear handmade, which they always were. "That's part of Katherine's story, part of who she is, so it was very important for us to develop homemade clothing as part of her character," Kalfus notes.

Kalfus asked all three lead actresses to wear corsets to really embody an age of girdles and cultivated posture – and to reflect how the women of West Computing aimed to be impeccable. “A corset does do something to your posture,” says Kalfus. “It gives a certain formality to how you hold yourself and even slows down your movement. We felt it really put Taraji, Octavia and Janelle into that time.”

Melfi gave Kalfus free reign. “With Renée, I completely trusted her process,” comments Melfi. “Every piece worn has a reason and an intention. She starts by asking ‘Why would this character wear this? What does it say about this person?’ And then you see the answers in her work.”

All these details gave the cast a rich environment in which to explore. Says Kevin Costner: “When you come onto a set and feel this kind of realism it informs you as an actor. It helps you move, and you start to feel engrossed in the history.”

The filmmakers hope that feeling also washes over audiences. “All movies require an enormous amount of commitment and passion,” notes Jenno Topping, “but I think that was even more true for *Hidden Figures* because we all felt such a responsibility to honor the real figures the movie is about. That brought an added level of meaning to us: the hope that audiences will get to know and enjoy these wonderful women.”

A Soaring Soundtrack

Theodore Melfi was thrilled that ten-time Grammy Award winner Pharrell Williams not only was aboard as producer, but also became another creative force on the film, collaborating with 9-time Oscar® - nominated legend Hans Zimmer on the score and contributing several original songs to the soundtrack.

“As we started talking about the music, I was just so blown away by Pharrell and his passion for this subject matter,” says Melfi. “Pharrell is a big uplifter of both science and women, so he was a natural fit with this story. And his music is stunning.”

Williams has always been deeply into the vibe of 60s music. “As soon as I met with him, he said, ‘I have ideas,’” recalls Melfi. “He kept sending us demos and every time it was like, ‘holy crap, this is astounding.’ I really feel his music gives the film its heartbeat.”

Williams says he could not have been more inspired. “This story has so much ascension in it, so I felt we had to match it musically. I hope the songs reflect the source of their energy.”

The original song “Runnin’” – performed by Williams -- was written from inside Katherine G. Johnson’s head as she’s in search of a segregated bathroom she can use, even while working in the upper echelons of NASA. “I’m a man of course, but I was trying very hard to put myself in Katherine’s lyrical shoes in that song,” says Williams. “And I’ve got to tell you, that’s tough. I had to really try to imagine

what her struggle must have felt like and express it in 3 minutes and 30 seconds. I'm excited that I could even have the opportunity to musically and melodically illustrate what she was going through.”

Another original song, “I See A Victory,” is written by Pharrell Williams and Kirk Franklin and performed with eminent Gospel singer Kim Burrell, known for the power of her voice and her signature blending of soulful jazz and R&B with traditional, inspirational Gospel sounds. The full soundtrack also features the voices of Mary J. Blige, Alicia Keys, Lalah Hathaway and cast member Janelle Monáe.

That unusual opportunity to reflect the story of Katherine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson in music was a thrill for Williams – just as it fueled everyone in the production.

Concludes Melfi: “What united us was telling this story of how a group of people at NASA – black, white, men and women – came together to achieve something great by putting all differences aside. Was it hard? Yes. Was it uncomfortable? Yes. Did it take time? Yes. But great things happen when people unite on equal terms.”

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RUNNIN'
(Music and Lyrics by Pharrell Williams)

Summertime in Virginia was an oven (oven)
All the kids eating ice cream with their cousins (cousins)
I was studying while you was playing the dozens (dozens)
Don't act like you was there when you wasn't

Runnin' from a man (man)
Runnin' from a badge (badge)
Don't act like you was there when you wasn't
Runnin' towards our plans (plans)
And the judges hands (hands)
Don't act like you was there when you wasn't

I know they say to crawl 'fore you walk
But in my mind I already jog
If I stand still, like "can I get far?"
They want the moon I'm on Mars

Sometimes my mind dives deep when I'm runnin'
I don't want no free ride, I'm just sick and tired of runnin'
Some nights I cry cause I can see the day comin'
Together we'll fly, oh, but no more runnin'

You and I are no different from each other (other)
Shut our eyes when I slumber I see numbers (numbers)
Black and white were computers I am colored (colored)
Don't act like you was there when you wasn't

From running to exams (exams)
To jobs for a man (man)
Don't act like you was there when you wasn't
And the law of the land (land)
Where women were often banned (banned)
Don't act like you was there when you wasn't

I SEE A VICTORY

(Music and Lyrics by Pharrell Williams and Kirk Franklin)

They'll call it a mystery, but we're gonna call it
VICTORY!
We'll be right in history it's gon' be
VICTORY!
They'll be signs on top of signs, just so you know the
HISTORY!
It's saying victory, oh oh
IS WITH ME!

Oh let them laugh about it
Don't worry what the doubters saying
Yes it's an uphill battle
But guess who else is playing?
The next time y'all in action
And the ghost is in the room
Watch it work through the masses
You know that we've been used

Let it go, let it be (let go, let it be)
No matter how deep (no matter how deep)
I swear just beneath (I swear just beneath)
You'll find your *VICTORY* (find your victory)

So I tallied all my losses
And I turned them into lessons
And what seemed to be less
I turned them into blessings
See I'm not trying to lose you
But the spirit is relentless
And when you let go and let it use you
Then you too will be a witness

Bible says you should pray for nothing,
Cause every week it's gon' be something
You know the devil can't wait to jump in
And complicate things you trust in
But I know my foundation is solid
It can take some hatin'
Prayers go beyond the space station
All the way to the Master's apron

ABOUT THE REAL-LIFE CHARACTERS

KATHERINE JOHNSON (Played by Taraji P. Henson):

One of the brightest minds of her generation, mathematician, physicist and space scientist, Katherine Johnson was born in West Virginia in 1918. Displaying an early aptitude for math, she was brilliant with figures. Encouraged by her parents and teachers, Johnson attended West Virginia State College and graduated with highest honors.

She became the first African American woman to attend graduate school at West Virginia University, when the state first integrated its graduate schools in 1930. Originally a teacher, Johnson was hired as a computer at NASA's Langley Research Center in 1953. She was assigned to the Flight Research Division and became indispensable, doing calculations for orbital trajectories on the early Mercury flights. Johnson did trajectory analysis for Alan Shepard, the first American in Space. Her math was instrumental to the success of the historic Friendship 7 Mission, in which astronaut John Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth. The early electronic IBM computer was essential to Glenn's flight, but not reliable, so Glenn insisted that "the girl" (he meant Johnson) manually check the numbers before his flight. The successful flight, of course, marked a turning point in the Space Race between the United States and the former Soviet Union. The stellar mathematician also worked on the calculations for the 1969 Apollo 11 flight to the moon, the Space Shuttle and the Earth Resources Satellite.

Johnson has three daughters from her first marriage to James Goble, who died in 1956. Since 1959, she has been married to Colonel James Johnson. In 2015, Katherine Johnson was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Obama.

DOROTHY VAUGHAN (Played by Octavia Spencer):

Born in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1910, Dorothy Vaughan was a gifted child who excelled academically and musically. Her family relocated to West Virginia when she was eight. Aged 15, Vaughan won a full scholarship to Wilberforce University in Ohio. Married to Howard Vaughan, the mother of six was a schoolteacher before joining NASA's Langley Research Center as a computer in the 40s. She was promoted to a management position and became NASA's first black supervisor.

A fierce champion for her staff, Vaughan devoted herself to fighting for promotions and pay raises for both black and white women computers. With the introduction of the first electronic computers to NASA, Vaughan had the foresight to realize that the role of the human computer would vanish. Reinventing herself, she learned how to program the IBM, becoming proficient in Fortran (computer programming language). Vaughan also encouraged the women in her department to become computer programmers, in

order to save their jobs. She joined the new Analysis and Computation Division (ACD), a racially and gender-integrated group on the frontier of electronic computing. Dorothy Vaughan died in 2008.

MARY JACKSON (Played by Janelle Monáe):

Born in Hampton Virginia in 1921, Mary Jackson graduated in math and physical science from Hampton Institute. Married to Levi Jackson Sr., the mother of two initially worked as teacher. A gifted mathematician, Jackson started her NASA career as a computer. Recognized for her excellent engineering skills, Jackson was encouraged by NASA engineer Kazimierz Czarnecki to enter a training program that would enable her to be promoted from mathematician to engineer.

Tenacious and courageous, she petitioned to be allowed into a segregated white high school, in order to take the college courses required for her to work officially as a NASA engineer. Winning her fight and completing her qualifications, Jackson went on to become NASA's first black female aerospace engineer and is thought to be the first black female engineer in the United States. Deeply concerned about equality for women, later in her career, Jackson took a demotion to become a human resources manager. Among the honors she received was an Apollo Group Achievement Award. For three decades, Jackson was an enthusiastic Girl Scouts leader. She died in 2005.

ABOUT THE CAST

Taraji P. Henson (Katherine G. Johnson) received the 2016 Golden Globe for Best Actress in Drama Series for her star turn as Cookie Lyon in the groundbreaking and award winning hit series *Empire*. She won a Critic's Choice Award for Best Actress in Drama Series for this portrayal. Henson earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress opposite Brad Pitt in David Fincher's *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. She won the 2015 and 2016 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actress and she has also been awarded Entertainer of the Year by the NAACP. Taraji is excited to release her story *Around The Way Girl* published by Simon and Schuster in October 2016.

Prior to *Hidden Figures*, Henson starred opposite Idris Elba in the Sony thriller *No Good Deed* which opened number one at the box office. Henson starred in the Sony comedy hits *Think Like a Man* and *Think Like a Man Too*. She starred in *From the Rough*, national release April 2014; the true story of Catana Starks of Tennessee State University who was the first woman coach to win a NCAA Championship.

In *Larry Crowne* she co-starred with star and director Tom Hanks. She starred in the hugely successful *Karate Kid* opposite Jaden Smith and Jackie Chan, and in *Date Night* with Tina Fey and Steve Carrell. For her role in Tyler Perry's *I Can Do Bad All By Myself*, she received the 2009 Diversity Award for Best Actress. She also starred in *Peep World* playing Rainn Wilson's love interest; *The Good Doctor* with Orlando Bloom and *Once Fallen* with Ed Harris.

Henson is an Emmy nominee for Best Actress in a Movie or Miniseries for Lifetime's *Taken From Me*. She received rave reviews for her role in Focus Features' *Talk to Me* opposite Don Cheadle and co-starred in the ensemble action drama *Smokin' Aces* with Ben Affleck and Alicia Keys. Henson was named Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Feature Film by the Black Movie Awards and received the BET Best Actress nod for her performance as Shug in the gutsy drama *Hustle & Flow*, also starring Terrence Howard. She starred in Sony's *Not Easily Broken* opposite Morris Chestnut, opposite Forest Whitaker in *Hurricane Season*, and Kathy Bates in Tyler Perry's *The Family That Preys*.

Henson made her singing debut in *Hustle & Flow* and performed the Academy Award®-winning song, "It's Hard Out Here for a Pimp," on the Oscar® telecast. She reunited for the third time with John Singleton to film *Four Brothers* with Mark Wahlberg. Henson co-starred with Simon Baker in *Something New* and is well remembered for her role as Yvette opposite Tyrese in *Baby Boy*.

On television, she tarred as Detective Joss Carter in the J.J. Abrams crime drama *Person of Interest* for CBS and she was a series regular on David E. Kelly's *Boston Legal* and recurred on ABC's *Eli Stone*. Henson starred in the Pasadena Playhouse production of Bernard Weinraub's new play *Above the Fold*, and in NY Public Radio's production of *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* directed by Phylicia Rashad, as part of August Wilson's American Century Cycle.

Born and raised in Washington, D.C., the Howard University graduate resides in Los Angeles. Henson has a strong dedication to helping disabled and less fortunate children and reveals, “I always stress to kids to have faith in themselves—the greatest recipe for success is self confidence.”

A veteran character actress and one of Hollywood’s most sought-after talents, Octavia Spencer has become a familiar fixture on both television and the silver screen. Her critically acclaimed performance as Minny in DreamWork’s feature film *The Help* won her the 2012 Academy Award, BAFTA Award, Golden Globe Award, SAG Award and Broadcast Film Critic’s Choice Award among numerous other honors.

Spencer was most recently seen reprising her role as Johanna in *Allegiant*, the third installment of Lionsgate’s highly successful, *The Divergent Series* franchise. She also voiced the character of Mrs. Otterton in the Disney animated film *Zootopia*, one of fastest worldwide grossing films of the year.

This year, **Octavia Spencer (Dorothy Vaughan)** will be seen in *The Shack*, a film based off of the best-selling novel of the same title that follows a man whose daughter is abducted during a family vacation with evidence found in an abandoned shack leading authorities to believe she was murdered. Four years later, the man receives a note, apparently from God (Spencer), instructing him to revisit the scene of the crime. She also co-stars in Marc Webb’s drama *Gifted* alongside Chris Evans and Jenny Slate. The film tells the story of Rank Adler, a deliberate underachiever who is raising his niece in rural Florida. She will also be seen in *The Free World*, a drama focusing on a recently released former convict who becomes involved with a married woman with an abusive husband that premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival; *Fathers and Daughters* with Quvenzhané Wallis, Diane Kruger, Russell Crowe, Amanda Seyfried, and Aaron Paul and *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, the adaptation of Katherine Peterson’s young adult Newberry Award winning novel.

In 2014, Spencer co-starred alongside Kevin Costner in the drama *Black or White*, which premiered at the 2014 Toronto Film Festival to rave reviews. Previously, Spencer co-starred in Tate Taylor’s *Get On Up*, a chronicle of musician James Brown’s rise to fame that also starred Viola Davis and Chadwick Boseman and the sci-fi, action-adventure *Snowpiercer* opposite Tilda Swinton and Chris Evans. Directed by Bong Joon-ho, the film followed a train that holds all remaining inhabitants on earth after a climate-change experiment wipes out the rest of the population, and the class system that emerges. In 2013, Spencer was seen in the indie-drama *Fruitvale Station* which follows the final hours of Oscar Grant’s life, a young man whose death sparked national outrage after video footage of his shooting was released to the public on New Year’s Eve 2009. *Fruitvale Station* won several prestigious awards including both the Grand Jury Prize and Audience Award for US Dramatic films at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival, the Un Certain Regard Award for Prix de l’avenir at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival, was named one of AFI’s Films of the Year and received nominations for the 2014 Spirit Awards and NAACP

Image Awards. Spencer was awarded “Best Supporting Actress” from the National Board of Review for her performance in the film and received an individual nomination from the NAACP Image Awards. She also served as a producer on the film.

Additional film credits include Diablo Cody’s directorial debut *Paradise* alongside Russell Brand and Julianne Hough, *Smashed*; an independent film which premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival, Bryce Dallas Howard’s directed segment of *Call Me Crazy: A Five Film*; an anthology of five short films focused on various stories of mental illness, *Blues for Willadean*, *Fly Paper*, *Peep World*, *Dinner For Schmucks*, *Small Town Saturday Night*, *Herpes Boy*, *Halloween II*, *The Soloist*, *Drag Me To Hell*, *Seven Pounds*, *Pretty Ugly People*, *Coach Carter*, *Charm School*, *Win A Date With Tad Hamilton*, *Bad Santa*, *Spiderman*, *Big Momma’s House*, *Being John Malkovich* and *Never Been Kissed* and *A Time to Kill*. In 2009, Spencer directed and produced a short film entitled *The Captain*, which was a finalist for the coveted Poetry Foundation Prize at the Chicago International Children’s Film Festival.

Spencer was recently seen guest starring in the latest season of the CBS series “Mom,” a comedy that centers on a newly sober mom attempting to pull her life together. Additionally, she made a memorable guest appearance in the final season of “30 Rock,” starred in the Comedy Central series “Halfway Home” and appeared in a five-episode arc as the character Constance Grady on the hit series “Ugly Betty.” Spencer has been seen in guest-starring roles on shows including “The Big Bang Theory,” “E.R.,” “CSI,” “CSI: NY,” “Raising The Bar,” “Medium,” and “NYPD Blue.”

Among her many other professional achievements, Spencer has co-authored an interactive mystery series for children called Randi Rhodes, Ninja Detective. The first title in the series, Randi Rhodes, Ninja Detective: The Case of the Time-Capsule Bandit was published by Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing in Fall 2013 and the second book, Randi Rhodes, Ninja Detective: Sweetest Heist in History is currently in bookstores.

Janelle Monáe (Mary Jackson) is a Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter, performer, producer and CoverGirl spokesperson known for her unique style and groundbreaking sound. Immersed in the performing arts at a young age, she founded her record label the Wondaland Arts Society releasing the EP “Metropolis: Suite I (The Chase).” In 2010, Monáe released the highly anticipated and critically acclaimed “ArchAndroid,” which reached No. 17 on the Billboard Charts and earned her two Grammy nominations, including one for the hit single “Tightrope.” Monáe performed at that year’s awards alongside Bruno Mars and B.O.B. 2013 saw the release of the critically acclaimed album “The Electric Lady” featuring Prince and Miguel, which reached No. 5 on the Billboard Top 200 Chart. The album’s first single “Q.U.E.E.N.” garnered rave reviews and the accompanying video received over 4 million YouTube views in its first week and a coveted MTV VMA Moonman. In February of 2015, Janelle launched her very own label, Wondaland Records.

Most recently, Monáe was featured in the Super Bowl 50 Pepsi commercial titled, the “Joy of Dance,” wherein she pays homage to some of the greatest musical acts of past and present. She makes her motion picture debut in *Hidden Figures*.

Kevin Costner (Al Harrison) began his career starring in independent films, gradually earning small parts in more established movies. His first major motion picture role was in the coming of age comedy, *Fandango*.

Throughout his career, Costner has varied his choices with comedy, action and drama role. He has appeared in such popular box-office hits as *No Way Out*, *Bull Durham*, *Field of Dreams*, *The Bodyguard* and *Wyatt Earp*.

Costner’s exceptional filmmaking abilities were showcased in *Dances with Wolves*, which he produced, directed and starred in, and which won seven Academy Awards including “Best Picture” and “Best Director.”

In addition to appearing in memorable roles in *JFK*, *The Untouchables* and *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, he re-teamed with his *Bull Durham* director Ron Shelton for the hit feature *Tin Cup*.

Costner also starred in *Thirteen Days*, successfully collaborating again with his *No Way Out* director Roger Donaldson. His other film credits include *For Love of the Game*, *The War*, *3,000 Miles to Graceland*, *Dragonfly* and *The Postman*, his second directing effort.

Kevin Costner last directed the box office hit and critically acclaimed film *Open Range*, which he also co-starred in alongside Robert Duvall and Annette Bening.

Costner co-starred with Joan Allen in the dramatic film *Upside of Anger*, opposite Jennifer Aniston in *Rumor Has It* directed by Rob Reiner for Warner Brothers, *The Guardian*, an action drama for Touchstone Pictures in which he portrayed a Coast Guard rescue swimmer, and the thriller *Mr. Brooks*, and starred in Touchstone Pictures’ political comedy *Swing Vote*.

Costner also starred in the History Channel’s record-setting mini-series *The Hatfields and McCoys: An American Vendetta* in which he portrayed “Devil” Anse Hatfield, the patriarch of the famed clan, opposite Bill Paxton. He also served as a producer of the series, which received 16 Emmy Award nominations, winning the Best Actor in a mini-series or movie Emmy for Costner. He also received the Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild Awards for his performance.

Most recently Costner was seen in the Warner Bros. film *Superman: Man of Steel*, as the superhero’s father Jonathan Kent; co-starring with Chris Pine in *Jack Ryan*, Paramount Pictures’ revival of Tom Clancy franchise; the spy thriller *Three Days to Kill* for Relativity Media; the football inspired *Draft Day*, directed by Ivan Reitman; the track team drama *McFarland* for Disney; the drama *Black & White*, which he produced and co-starred with Octavia Spencer; and *Criminal*, in which he co-starred with Gary Oldman, Tommy Lee Jones and Ryan Reynolds.

Costner is also produced and co-authored the New York Times bestselling adventure novel *The Explorers Guild*.

When Costner is not working on films, he sings lead vocals and plays lead guitar in his band, Modern West, and can be seen playing venues across the country. The band recently recorded a collection of songs from and inspired by *The Hatfields & McCoys*. Featuring the song "These Hills," the album is entitled *Famous For Killing Each Other*. The band's song "The Angels Came Down" from their album *Turn It On*, was recently adopted by the Gold Star Moms and Gold Star Wives organizations, which support the mothers, wives and families of fallen soldiers.

Mahershala Ali (Jim Johnson) is fast becoming one of the freshest and most in-demand faces in Hollywood with his extraordinarily diverse skill set and wide-ranging background in film, television, and theater.

On the big screen, Ali is set to star opposite Naomie Harris and Andre Holland in *Moonlight*. The film, out October 21, 2016, opened to rave reviews at Telluride and Toronto International Film Festivals. He also joins the cast in Theodore Melfi's *Hidden Figures*, opposite Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer, Janelle Monáe, and Kevin Costner, out January 13, 2017.

Ali can currently be seen starring in Netflix and Marvel Entertainment's *Luke Cage* in the role of Cornell "Cottonmouth" Stokes. A Harlem nightclub owner, Stokes will become an unexpected foe in Luke's life when Stokes' criminal activities threaten Luke's world. Ali stars alongside Mike Colter, Rosario Dawson, and Alfre Woodard. The series premiered on Netflix on September 30, 2016.

Ali was most recently seen starring in Focus Features' *Kicks*, which premiered on September 9, 2016 and in Gary Ross's civil war era drama *The Free State of Jones* opposite Matthew McConaughey, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, and Keri Russell. STX Entertainment released the film on June 24, 2016.

Last fall, Ali reprised his role in *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2*, the fourth and final installment in the critically and commercially acclaimed *Hunger Games* franchise, alongside Jennifer Lawrence, Donald Sutherland, and Julianne Moore. As District 13's Head of Security, 'Boggs' (Ali) guides and protects Katniss (Lawrence) through the final stages of the district's rebellion against the Capitol. Lionsgate released the film on November 20, 2015.

Ali can currently be seen on the award-winning Netflix original series *House of Cards*, where he reprised his fan-favorite role as lobbyist Remy Danton, who went on to become Chief of Staff in the fourth season. He was recently nominated for an Emmy for his work on the show.

Ali's previous feature film credits include Derek Cianfrance's *The Place Beyond the Pines* opposite Ryan Gosling and Bradley Cooper, Wayne Kramer's *Crossing Over* starring Harrison Ford, John Sayles' *Go For Sisters*, and David Fincher's *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*.

On television, he appeared opposite Julia Ormond in Lifetime's *The Wronged Man* for which he subsequently received a NAACP Nomination for Best Actor. Ali also had a large recurring role on Syfy's *Alphas*, as well as the role of Richard Tyler, a Korean War pilot, on the critically acclaimed drama *The 4400* for three seasons.

On the stage, Ali appeared in productions of *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *The School for Scandal*, *A Lie of the Mind*, *A Doll's House*, *Monkey in the Middle*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The New Place* and *Secret Injury*, *Secret Revenge*. His additional stage credits include appearing in Washington, D.C. at the Arena Stage in the title role of *The Great White Hope*, and in *The Long Walk* and *Jack and Jill*. He also just completed his starring run in the off-Broadway play *Smart People*, for which he received rave reviews.

Originally from Hayward, California, Ali received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communications at St. Mary's College. He made his professional debut performing with the California Shakespeare Festival in Orinda, California. Soon after, he earned his Master's degree in acting from New York University's prestigious graduate program.

Jim Parsons (Paul Stafford) stars as 'Sheldon Cooper' on CBS' critically acclaimed hit *The Big Bang Theory*. He has received several awards for his performance, including four Emmy Awards for 'Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series', the Golden Globe Award for 'Best Actor in a Television Series Musical or Comedy' and the Critics' Choice Television Award for 'Best Actor in a Comedy Series'. *The Big Bang Theory* has helped CBS launch their comedy line-up, regularly winning the night across all networks. Season 10 of *The Big Bang Theory* will premiere on September 19, 2016.

Parsons last starred on Broadway in AN ACT OF GOD, a 90-minute comedy where God and His devoted angels answer some of the deepest questions that have plagued mankind since Creation. Based on the critically acclaimed book [The Last Testament: A Memoir by God](#), the play was written by 13-time Emmy Award winner David Javerbaum and directed by two-time Tony Award® winner Joe Mantello.

On the big screen, Parsons previously voiced the lead role in the box office hit *Home*, costarring singer/actress Rihanna. To date the film has grossed over \$368 million worldwide. The film was a DreamWorks Animation adaption of the award-winning book [The True Meaning of Smekday](#) by Adam Rex. In *Home*, a friendly alien race invades Earth and uses it as a hideout from their mortal enemy. When one lowly alien (Parsons) accidentally notifies the enemies of his whereabouts, he is forced to go on the run with a teenage girl (Rihanna), embarking on a comical road-trip across a post-apocalyptic America and learning what it really means to be human.

In Spring 2014, Parsons starred opposite Taylor Kitsch, Julia Roberts, Mark Ruffalo and Matt Bomer in *The Normal Heart*, HBO's original movie adaptation of the Tony Award-winning Larry Kramer play, which was written by Kramer and directed by Ryan Murphy. The project tells the story of the onset

of the HIV-AIDS crisis in New York City in the early 1980s. Parsons portrayed the role of gay activist Tommy Boatwright, reprising his role from the 2011 Broadway revival. Parsons received an Emmy nomination for his role, and the film won an Emmy for ‘Outstanding Television Movie’.

He also voiced the lead character, ‘Buddy’ in NBC’s animated holiday special, *Elf: Buddy’s Musical Christmas*. The special was based on the popular film *Elf* and the hit Broadway show *Elf: The Musical*. The stop motion hour-long special aired in December 2014.

Parsons many film credits include Blumhouse Production’s thriller *Visions* opposite Isla Fisher, Gillian Jacobs and Anson Mount; Todd Phillips *School for Scoundrels*, opposite Billy Bob Thorton and Jon Heder for The Weinstein Company; as well as Chris Terrio's *Heights* opposite Glenn Close and James Marsden for Merchant/Ivory. He has also created scene stealing roles in several independent films such as Zach Braff's *Wish I Was Here* and *Garden State*, Kevin Connolly's *Gardner of Eden* and Danny Leiner's *The Great New Wonderful*.

On the stage, Parsons starred in the Broadway revival of Mary Chase’s Pulitzer Prize winning play *Harvey*, in the role of ‘Elwood Dowd’, the genial eccentric who claims to see a six-foot-tall white rabbit ‘Harvey.’ The production ran with limited engagement at the famous Studio 54 in New York City. Parsons received a Theatre World Award for his debut Broadway performance as ‘Tommy Boatwright’ in *The Normal Heart*, starring opposite Ellen Barkin, John Benjamin Hickey, and Joe Mantello. *The Normal Heart* won a Tony Award for “Best Revival of a Play” and was presented with the Drama Desk Award for “Outstanding Revival of a Play” and “Outstanding Ensemble Performance.” *The Normal Heart* also received nominations from The Outer Critics Circle for “Outstanding Revival of a Play,” as well as five Tony Award nominations. Parsons’ other stage performances include, *The Castle* for the Manhattan Ensemble Theater, *The Countess* for the Globe Theater as well as *The Tempest* and *As You Like It* for the Houston Shakespeare Festival.

Parsons earned a Master’s Degree in Fine Arts from the Old Globe Theater/University of San Diego and a BA from the University of Houston. He currently resides in Los Angeles.

Kimberly Quinn (Ruth/Co-Producer) is an actress, writer, producer and director working in film, television and theatre. Quinn has most recently joined the cast of the Netflix original series, *Gypsy*, starring Naomi Watts.

Quinn also appeared as a series regular in the FOX series, *Terriers*. Though short lived, it is one of the top 25 comedy series streamed on Netflix, now with its own cult following. She also starred in the ABC Family drama, *Twisted*.

In film, she acted in and co-produced the Golden Globe nominated film, *St. Vincent*, working along side Bill Murray, Melissa McCarthy and Naomi Watts, which was released by The Weinstein Company in October 2014. Based on an idea and the life of Quinn’s father, the film is about the unlikely

friendship between a young boy and an old curmudgeon man with a good heart. The film was nominated for two Golden Globe Awards (Best Comedy, Best Leading Actor), four Critics Choice Awards (Best Comedy, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Young Performer) and one SAG Award (Best Supporting Actress).

Quinn recently directed her short film, *Frayed*, which was nominated for best picture at Emerge Film Festival.

Quinn is also writing and producing the television pilot, *Cowboy*. *Cowboy* explores a woman who has hit rock bottom in small town USA and decides she has nothing to lose... so she robs a bank... and likes it.

In addition to all of her above credits, Quinn co-founded Goldenlight Films with her husband Director, Ted Melfi.

Kirsten Dunst (Vivian Mitchell) Kirsten Dunst earned early fame for her performance in *Interview with the Vampire* and later starred in Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man* trilogy.

Born on April 30, 1982, in Point Pleasant, New Jersey, Kirsten Dunst made her film debut in Woody Allen's *New York Stories*. She went on to appear in *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, before landing her breakout role in *Interview with the Vampire*. In 2002, Dunst starred in *Spider-Man* as the love interest of the titular superhero, a role she reprised for two sequels. Recently, she has earned acclaim for her performance in the FX series *Fargo*.

Actress Kirsten Dunst was born on April 30, 1982, in Point Pleasant, New Jersey, and made her acting debut before she was able to walk. She was signed to the Ford Modeling Agency as a child and by age 12, she had made over 100 commercials.

In 1989, Dunst made her film debut with a minor part in Woody Allen's *New York Stories*. This was followed by a role as Tom Hanks's daughter in the 1990 film adaptation of Tom Wolfe's best-selling novel *The Bonfire of the Vanities*.

Dunst got her big break at the tender age of 11, when she played the pre-pubescent bloodsucker Claudia in the screen adaptation of Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1994). Although critical response to the film was mixed, Dunst received high marks from reviewers for her controlled portrayal of an adult perpetually trapped in a child's body. Rice's literary following flocked to the film and made Dunst a ghoulish cult favorite. For her performance, Dunst received the MTV Movie Award for best breakthrough performance and a Golden Globe nomination for best supporting actress.

Dunst went on to appear in a string of major Hollywood productions, including *Little Women* (1994), *Jumanji* (1995) and *Wag the Dog* (1997), and also received critical attention for her performances in the less-publicized mock-documentary *Drop Dead Gorgeous* (1999) and the political spoof *Dick* (1999).

The actress engineered a successful transition to “adult” roles with her appearance in Sophia Coppola’s *The Virgin Suicides* (2000). Dunst received positive critical attention for her facility with the movie’s weighty themes of teen suicide and burgeoning sexuality.

In 2002, Dunst brought the much-loved comic book character Mary Jane "M. J." Watson to the big screen in director Sam Raimi's blockbuster version of *Spider-Man*. With Tobey Maguire in the title role, the movie highlighted the transformation of Peter Parker into the legendary web-slinger. To play Peter Parker’s spunky love interest, Dunst had to dye her blonde hair to red and handle being put in great peril. The duo reprised their parts for the sequel *Spider-Man 2* in 2004, in which the superhero battled Doctor Octopus (Alfred Molina). In *Spider-Man 3*, (2007), the final installment of the trilogy, Peter Parker wrestles with internal forces as well as villains to keep from destroying his relationships with those he cares for, including his great love M.J.

In addition to her work in the mega-successful *Spider-Man* franchise, Dunst has worked in smaller, off-beat films. She appeared in the unusual romantic drama *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004), with Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet. Working again with Sophia Coppola, Dunst took on the title character in *Marie Antoinette* (2006), one of most infamous members of the French aristocracy.

Dunst has since starred in the British comedy *How to Lose Friends & Alienate People* (2008), and earned strong reviews for her turn in Lars Van Trier's *Melancholia* (2011). Transitioning to the small screen, she joined Season 2 of the FX series *Fargo* in 2015, adding to the buzz surrounding the show with a Golden Globe-nominated performance.

Glen Powell (John Glenn) was recently described by The Hollywood Reporter as the “Next Big Thing,” Glen Powell is well on his way to becoming one of tinsel towns’ most sought after actors.

Up next for Powell is the second season of the FOX hit *Scream Queens*. Powell will reprise his fan favorite role of “Chad Radwell,” President of the Dickie Dollars Scholars. The Ryan Murphy show proved to be a critic and fan favorite among the Fall 2015 freshman class. Also upcoming for Powell is *The Set Up*, starring opposite Emilia Clarke. The MGM film is currently in pre-production but slated for a 2017 release.

This past December, Powell wrapped production on the Iraq War drama *Sand Castle*. Further proving his acting chops, Powell will star opposite action heavy weights Henry Cavil, Nicholas Holt and Luke Evans. The film follows an American military unit on a mission to repair a water system in the turbulent Iraqi village of Baqubah. Powell plays ‘Sgt. Falvy,’ a tough-minded and foul-mouthed soldier hailing for the south. The film is slated for a late 2016 release.

2016 is proving to be the year of Powell as he has been featured in two major motion pictures including April’s critically acclaimed film *Everybody Wants Some*, directed by Richard Linklater. The Paramount Pictures’ film, set in the '80’s, follows a college freshman who rolls with some colorful

baseball players. The highly anticipated film is being referred to as the spiritual sequel to Linklater's cult classic film *Dazed And Confused*. Additionally, Glen was seen in January's comedy *Ride Along 2* opposite funnyman Kevin Hart and Ice Cube portraying a lethal drug-lord on the streets of Atlanta. Powell will be seen in *Beyond Deceit* alongside silver screen royalty Sir Anthony Hopkins and Al Pacino. The independent film is slated for a late 2016 release.

In 2014, Powell co-starred with Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Mel Gibson, Jason Statham and Harrison Ford in *Expendables 3*. He joined the ranks as an expert hacker and drone pilot named 'Thron', singular to none in his intensity and agility. Powell was also seen in the independent thriller, *Wind Walkers* from director Russell Friendenberg. Other film credits include the independent comedy *Sex Ed* opposite Hayley Joel Osment, *Red Wing* starring alongside Bill Paxton, as well as the final installment of the Christopher Nolan Batman trilogy, *The Dark Knight Rises* opposite Christian Bale, Tom Hardy and Anne Hathaway.

Aldis Hodge (Levi Jackson) is perhaps best known for his role as Alec Hardison on TNT's highly rated television series, *Leverage*, which nabbed a People's Choice Award in 2013, in addition to his role as MC Ren in Universal Pictures' *Straight Outta Compton*. The film gained critical acclaim and was nominated for various awards including a 2016 Screen Actors Guild Award in the category of Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture, a 2016 Producers Guild Award, as well as an Academy Award® for Best Original Screenplay. *Straight Outta Compton* received African American Film Critics Association awards in the categories of Best Picture and Best Ensemble and an NAACP Image Award in the category of Outstanding Motion Picture.

Recently, he starred in the Amazon pilot, *The After* from *X-Files* creator Chris Carter in addition to his recurring role on AMC's *Turn*. Hodge can also be seen in the Fox Searchlight eco-terrorism thriller *The East* alongside Alexander Skarsgard, Ellen Page, Patricia Clarkson, and Brit Marling. Directed by Zal Batmanglij, the film premiered at Sundance 2013. Hodge also appeared in Twentieth Century Fox's *A Good Day to Die Hard*, the latest installment of the *Die Hard* franchise.

In March 2016, Hodge can be seen starring in the Sony Pictures Television series, *Underground* for WGN America, opposite Jurnee Smollett-Bell and Christopher Meloni. Most recently, he wrapped production on *Jack Reacher: Never Go Back*, starring opposite Tom Cruise.

Hodge started his career at three years old as a model for print ads and commercials until he made the transition to the small screen when he and his brother Edwin Hodge were cast on "Sesame Street" and later on stage when they joined the Tony-winning revival of "Showboat" on Broadway. During that period, Hodge also appeared in several movies including "Die Hard with a Vengeance," "Bed of Roses," "The Stone House," "Edmond," "The Lady Killers" and "Big Momma's House."

His television roles include the critically acclaimed series *Friday Night Lights*, *Supernatural*, *The Walking Dead*, *Girlfriends*, *American Dreams*, *City of Angels*, *Bones*, *CSI*, *ER*, *Cold Case*, *Charmed* and *Boston Public*.

Hodge was born in Jacksonville, North Carolina and raised in New York. In addition to acting, Hodge writes scripts for film and television, designs luxury timepieces and is an avid artist and painter.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Theodore Melfi, P.G.A. (Director/Producer) is the producer/writer/director of *St. Vincent* starring Bill Murray, Melissa McCarthy, Naomi Watts, Terrence Howard, Kimberly Quinn & Chris O'Dowd, and produced along with Peter Chernin, Fred Roos and Jenno Topping, which was released by The Weinstein Company in October 2014. Based on an idea from Melfi's daughter, the film is about an unlikely friendship between a young boy and a misunderstood man with a good heart. The film was nominated for two *Golden Globe Awards* (Best Comedy, Best Leading Actor), four *Critics Choice Awards* (Best Comedy, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Young Performer) and one *SAG Award* (Best Supporting Actress).

A commercial director by day, Melfi has helmed over a hundred commercials including the infamous MTV spot, "Pizza Guy," starring adult film egend Ron Jeremy. The spot (along with Budweiser "Oh My G-d,") contributed to the director being honored at the Clio Awards as one of SHOOT Magazine's Top 15 Directing Talents. His spot work for the LA Film Festival entitled "Playground," received the Silver Award at the London International Advertising & Design Awards, and Melfi was nominated for the Best Young Director Award at Cannes.

As a screenwriter, Melfi recently penned the remake of the Martin Brest classic *Going in Style* for New Line Cinema, which will be released in April 2017. Melfi's other screenplays include, the Hit List script, *I Am Rose Fatou*, the story of two ne're-do-well lovers that meet in a phishing scheme, he also adapted the NY Times bestselling memoir: *The Tender Bar* (by J.R. Moehringer) for Sony/Columbia with Peter Chernin and Jenno Topping producing, and he is currently writing an original dramedy for Fox 2000, entitled *Fruitloops*, a project in the vein of *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest*.

Allison Schroeder (Screenplay Adaptation) is a screenwriter in Los Angeles. *Hidden Figures* draws on her personal history, growing up near NASA in Florida where both her grandparents worked and then she interned herself at NASA for many years. Schroeder also has a musical pilot in development at Universal Cable and a feature, *Agatha*, is in development at Paramount. Her other credits include the musical *Side Effects*, *90210* and *Mean Girls 2*. She is the Co-Chair of the WGA Women's Committee and serves on the WGA Diversity Advisory Board.

Both of Schroeder's grandparents worked at NASA in Cape Canaveral as engineers, first on the Mercury, then Apollo missions. Her grandmother, who was one of the first women in mission control, stayed on for the shuttle missions as well.

When Schroeder was in 8th grade, she was selected for NASA's NURTURE program, attending special sessions at Cape Canveral and learning a variety of things from programming to how the shuttle worked.

She later attended Stanford, majoring in Economics, which was also heavy in math. Although she is now devoted to her career as a writer, she still does math -- most recently breaking out the latest WGA statistics on hiring for women and minorities into a variety of user-friendly charts and graphs.

Writer, researcher, and entrepreneur **Margot Lee Shetterley (Author, Executive Producer)** is the author of [Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race](#) (Fall 2016, HarperCollins). A 2014 Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Fellow and Virginia Foundation for the Humanities grantee, Shetterly is the founder of The Human Computer Project, a virtual museum that tells the stories of the female mathematicians of all backgrounds whose work tipped the balance in favor of the United States in WWII, the Cold War, and the Space Race. She is a native of Hampton, Virginia, where she knew many of the women behind the history in *Hidden Figures*.

Donna Gigliotti, P.G.A. (Producer) is one of only eight women to win an Academy Award for Best Picture. She received the 1998 Oscar® for producing *Shakespeare In Love*. Among its thirteen nominations, seven Oscars® were awarded the film, including Best Actress (Gwyneth Paltrow), Best Supporting Actress (Judi Dench) and Best Original Screenplay (Tom Stoppard and Marc Norman). Gigliotti also received the 1999 Golden Globe® for Best Picture/Comedy and the 2000 British Academy Award (BAFTA) on behalf of the film.

In 2009, Gigliotti was nominated again for Best Picture for producing *The Reader*, directed by Stephen Daldry. The film was nominated for a total of five Academy Awards®, including Best Actress, which star Kate Winslet ultimately won. *The Reader* was also nominated for the 2008 Golden Globe® for Best Picture/Drama, the 2008 British Academy Award (BAFTA) for Best Picture and the 2009 European Film Award.

Gigliotti's third Best Picture/Academy Award nomination was granted in 2013 for *Silver Linings Playbook* directed by David O. Russell. The film received seven nominations and achieved a rare feat in Academy Award history. All four actors (Bradley Cooper, Jennifer Lawrence, Robert DeNiro, Jackie Weaver) were nominated in their lead or supporting categories; Jennifer Lawrence ultimately won the Best Actress Academy Award. The film was also nominated for five Independent Spirit Awards and won in four categories including Best Picture. Additionally, four Golden Globe nominations were awarded to *Silver Linings Playbook*. Gigliotti won the 2013 Best International Picture Award from the Australian Academy of Film.

Currently, Gigliotti serves as President of Levantine Films, a financing and production company based in New York. For Levantine she has produced *The Fundamentals Of Caring* starring Paul Rudd and executive produced *Beasts of No Nation* starring Idris Elba.

Gigliotti served as President of Production at The Weinstein Company beginning in 2010 where, in addition to executive duties, she also produced *I Don't Know How She Does It*, starring Sarah Jessica Parker. She was instrumental in the productions of *My Week With Marilyn*, starring Michelle Williams, *Our Idiot Brother*, starring Paul Rudd, *W.E.*, starring Andrea Riseborough and the animated film, *Escape From Planet Earth*.

Previously, Gigliotti served as President of Production at USA Films, a division of Barry Diller's USA Entertainment Group. During her tenure, the company produced Steven Soderbergh's *Traffic* (winning Best Director, Best Actor and Best Original Screenplay Oscars in 2001), Robert Altman's *Gosford Park* (winning the Best Original Screenplay Oscar in 2002), Neil LaBute's *Possession* starring Gwyneth Paltrow and Joel and Ethan Coen's *The Man Who Wasn't There*. Gigliotti was also responsible for the acquisition of Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* and Wong Kar-wai's *In The Mood For Love*.

Gigliotti was executive vice president at Miramax Films from 1993 to 1996, where she oversaw and executive produced several films including Doug McGrath's *Emma*, starring Gwyneth Paltrow, Michael Hoffman's *Restoration*, starring Robert Downey Jr., and Franco Zeffereilli's *Jane Eyre*, starring Charlotte Gainsbourg.

Additional producing credits include LET ME IN, directed by Matt Reeves and starring Kodi Smitt-McPhee and Richard Jenkins, which was nominated for Best Film at the 2010 Gotham Awards; *Two Lovers*, directed by James Gray and starring Gwyneth Paltrow and Joaquin Phoenix, which competed in the 2009 Cannes Film Festival and was named one of the Top 10 Independent Films of 2009 by the National Board of Review, *Shanghai*, directed by Mikael Halfstrom and starring John Cusack and Gong Li, *The Good Night*, starring Gwyneth Paltrow and Penelope Cruz, and *Vanity Fair*, directed by Mira Nair, starring Reese Witherspoon. Gigliotti began her career in the motion picture industry as an assistant to Martin Scorsese on *Raging Bull*.

Following her work on *Raging Bull*, Gigliotti moved to United Artists, where she was the director of acquisitions for specialty division UA Classics. There, with partners Tom Bernard and Michael Barker, she acquired Jean-Jacques Beineix's *Diva*, François Truffaut's *The Woman Next Door* and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Veronika Voss*.

Next, Gigliotti moved (with Bernard and Barker) to form Orion Classics for Arthur Krim, former chairman of United Artists and then chairman of Orion Pictures Corporation. Orion Classics proved to be the preeminent distributor of specialized films during the 1980s. Gigliotti was responsible for the acquisition of such films as Louis Malle's *Au Revoir Les Enfants*, Pedro Almodovar's *Women On The Verge Of A Nervous Breakdown*, Steven Frears's *My Beautiful Laundrette*, Akira Kurosawa's *Ran*, Claude Berri's *Jean De Florette* and Gabriel Axel's Oscar®-winning *Babette's Feast*.

In 1985, Gigliotti was knighted to the rank of Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Republic. She is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science and the Producer's Guild

of America. Gigliotti is a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College.

Peter Chernin, P.G.A. (Producer) is the CEO of The Chernin Group (TCG), which he founded in 2009. Through Chernin Entertainment, TCG's entertainment production company, Chernin has produced a string of box office hits, including the global blockbuster features *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* and *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* which re-launched the franchise for a new generation, action comedies *The Heat* and *Spy*, Tim Burton's *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*, sci-fi thriller *Oblivion*, dramedy *St. Vincent*, and crime drama *The Drop*. Upcoming films from the company include Ted Melfi's *Hidden Figures*, the *Untitled Mother/Daughter Comedy* starring Amy Schumer and Goldie Hawn, *The Greatest Showman on Earth* starring Hugh Jackman, and *War for the Planet of the Apes*. Chernin serves as an executive producer on FOX's hit television comedy *New Girl*. His previous executive producing credits include *Ben and Kate* and *Touch*.

TCG's assets also include CA Media, an Asia-based media investment company; Otter Media, a venture formed with AT&T to invest in and launch global over-the-top video services, which oversees a portfolio of businesses including Fullscreen Media, Crunchyroll and Gunpowder & Sky; and strategic investments in U.S.-based technology and media companies including Pandora, SoundCloud, Headspace, Flipboard, Scopely, Medium, and Barstool Sports.

Prior to starting TCG, Chernin served as President and Chief Operating Officer of News Corporation, and Chairman & CEO of the Fox Group. Chernin sits on the Boards of American Express and UC Berkeley, and is a senior advisor to Providence Equity Partners. He is Chairman and Co-Founder of Malaria No More, a non-profit dedicated to ending deaths due to malaria. Chernin holds a B.A. in English from UC Berkeley.

Jenno Topping, P.G.A. (Producer) is the President of film and television at Chernin Entertainment. She recently produced and oversaw the development of feature films *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* directed by Tim Burton; *Spy* directed by Paul Feig and starring Melissa McCarthy; *St. Vincent* starring Bill Murray and Melissa McCarthy; *The Drop* starring James Gandolfini and Tom Hardy; *Mike And Dave Need Wedding Dates* starring Zac Efron, Adam Devine, Anna Kendrick and Aubrey Plaza; *Exodus* directed by Ridley Scott and starring Christian Bale; and *The Heat* starring Sandra Bullock and Melissa McCarthy, which was the highest grossing comedy of 2013. Upcoming films Topping produced and oversaw include the *Untitled Mother/Daughter Comedy* starring Amy Schumer and Goldie Hawn; Ted Melfi's *Hidden Figures* starring Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer and Janelle Monáe; and *War For The Planet Of The Apes*, the third installment in the global hit franchise.

Topping oversees Chernin Entertainment's television slate, which includes Fox's Emmy®-winning hit comedy *New Girl*, which is now in its sixth season. Previous series from Chernin Entertainment include Fox's *Ben and Kate* and *Touch*.

Topping's other credits include *Country Strong* starring Gwyneth Paltrow and Tim McGraw; *Catch And Release*, written and directed by Susannah Grant and starring Jennifer Garner; and the *Charlie's Angels* movies.

Topping previously served as an executive for HBO Films, where she supervised the Emmy® and Golden Globe® Award-winning films, *The Late Shift* (Kathy Bates) and *Rasputin* (Ian McKellan and Alan Rickman) in 1995.

Redefining cool for a new generation, **Pharrell Williams, P.G.A. (Producer/Composer)** is a creative force, using music, fashion, and design to express his distinctive style. From his beginnings as a teenage prodigy and multi-instrumentalist in Virginia Beach back in the early '90s, through enough hits to earn him *Billboard*'s Producer of the Decade in 2010, to his current status as multi-media superstar, Williams has never stopped creating. Starting his producing career as one half of The Neptunes with Chad Hugo, Williams has helped create such classics as Daft Punk's "Get Lucky," Robin Thicke's "Blurred Lines," Nelly's "Hot in Herre," Jay-Z's "I Just Wanna Love U (Give it 2 Me)," Britney Spears's "I'm A Slave 4 U," and Justin Timberlake's "Like I Love You." With over 100 million copies of his productions sold, his music sounds like something no one else has thought of just yet.

He's also created a new way of looking at established stars like Snoop Dogg, Madonna, and even the Rolling Stones. Over four albums, Williams and Hugo along with Shae Haley created an unpredictable hybrid as part of the alt-rock/hip-hop group N.E.R.D. The music industry has honored Pharrell with 11 Grammy Awards (including 2004's and 2014's "Producer of the Year") and ASCAP's prestigious Golden Note Award in 2012. He also received a 2014 Academy Award Nomination for his original song "Happy" featured in the animated film *Despicable Me 2*. "Happy" remained atop the Billboard Hot 100 chart for ten consecutive weeks, peaked at #1 on iTunes in 103 markets worldwide, and was the lead single off his Grammy-nominated album, "G I R L." His prolific body of work also includes designing a sculpture with Tokyo-born artist Takashi Murakami, accessories and jewelry for luxury goods brand Louis Vuitton, t-shirts for Japanese mega-brand Uniqlo, sneakers and sportswear for Adidas and a fragrance collaboration with Comme des Garçons.

In 2008, he founded From One Hand To AnOTHER (FOHTA), a foundation focused on supporting the Pharrell Williams Resource Centers' learning programs for underserved youth in at risk communities across the nation. For the past two years, Pharrell has partnered with the United Nations Foundation for the International Day of Happiness to inspire individuals all over the globe to celebrate their unique "happy." Most recently, Pharrell partnered with Apple Music to launch their new streaming

service with his latest anthem, “Freedom.” Pharrell can next be seen as a coach on Season 10 of “The Voice.” Now, with his latest venture i am OTHER — a multi-media creative collective that serves as an umbrella for all his endeavors, including record label, Billionaire Boys Club & ICECREAM apparel, textile company Bionic Yarn and the film *Dope* — Williams’s vision continues to push pop culture forward.

Jamal Daniel (Executive Producer) is President and Chairman of Crest Investment Company. Daniel has thirty years’ experience managing investments in high technology, media, mining, manufacturing, oil and gas, real estate and telecommunications. As Chief Executive Officer of Levantine Films, Daniel served as Executive Producer on *Beasts of No Nation* and *The Fundamentals of Caring*. Daniel is also the founder and publisher of Al-Monitor (www.al-monitor.com), an American news website focused on in-depth coverage and fresh perspectives from the Middle East.

Renee Witt (Executive Producer) began her career at William Morris and specialized as an executive in the development and production of books. Her list of projects includes *About a Boy*, *The Notebook* and *The Time Travelers Wife*. She spent nearly a decade at New Line Cinema, where she became VP of development and production, and later served as SVP at Laura Ziskin Productions and EVP at The Weinstein Company. Witt was a co-executive producer on *Silver Linings Playbook*, which she helped to develop.

Ivana Lombardi (Executive Producer) is Vice President of Film at Chernin Entertainment. Chernin has a first look deal with 20th Century Fox and is responsible for such hits as the *Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes* movies and *The Heat*. Ivana has developed and produced a variety of films at Chernin, including *St. Vincent*, directed by Ted Melfi and the upcoming *Miss Peregrine’s Home For Peculiar Children*, to be directed by Tim Burton.

Prior to joining Chernin Entertainment, Lombardi was at Tobey Maguire’s Material Pictures, a production company with a first look deal at Sony. There she worked on films including *Country Strong*, directed by Shana Feste. Her first job in Los Angeles was at Dreamworks Animation, working on *Monsters Vs. Aliens*.

Before relocating to LA, Lombardi was one of the original team of executives that launched Spike TV, where she developed and oversaw series and documentaries. She began her career as assistant to the head of film and television for Nickelodeon.

A NYC native, Lombardi graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Oberlin College.

For more than twenty years, award-winning multi-hyphenate (chief creative officer, writer, editor, producer, speaker) **Mimi Valdés (Executive Producer)** has changed the way the world consumes pop

culture. Her background in journalism—she's a former editor-in-chief of *VIBE* and *Latina* magazines—provides a road map for each project she works on. Whether influencing the creation of the groundbreaking 24-hour-music video “Happy”; co-producing Sundance Film Festival and Cannes Film Festival indie darling *Dope* (2015); or overseeing creative for Pharrell Williams’ company, i am OTHER, she produces content with a lasting impact.

Regardless of the medium, venue or audience, Mimi's message stays true to her core belief that storytelling should entertain, educate and inspire humanity. A passion to influence the next generation of storytellers is reflective in all that she does. She’s a proud alumna of New York University’s prestigious journalism program. A native New Yorker, she resides in Brooklyn, NY with her husband.

Kevin Halloran (Executive Producer) most recently executive produced STX's *The Space Between Us* starring Asa Butterfield and Gary Oldman. His other production credits include *The Sea of Trees* directed by Gus Van Sant and starring Mathew McConaughey, Naomi Watts and Ken Watanabe, Disney’s film *Million Dollar Arm* starring Jon Hamm. *Water For Elephants* starring Reese Witherspoon and Robert Pattinson, *Parental Guidance* starring Billy Crystal, *Tooth Fairy* and *Eragon* for Twentieth Century Fox; *Red Dawn* for MGM and *Bridge to Terabithia* for Disney.

With a filmography of more than 40 feature films, Halloran, a native of Indiana, began his career over 25 years ago as a Production Assistant on Shelly Duvall's *Faerie Tale Theater* television series. Shortly thereafter he became a Location Manager, in which capacity his credits included *Pow Wow Highway* and the critically acclaimed television series *The West Wing*, among many others. He soon transitioned into Production Management on films such as *Shallow Hal*, *House Of Sand And Fog*, and the indie classic *The Minus Man*.

Even as a teenager in Australia, **Mandy Walker (Director of Photography ASC, ACS)** knew she wanted to be a cinematographer. Starting her film career as a runner at age 18, Walker shot her first film as director of photography at just 25. Since then her skills have been in great demand by directors all over the world, and has received international recognition and numerous awards for her beautiful cinematography.

Her feature credits include Baz Luhrmann’s Oscar®-nominated *Australia* starring Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman, for which she won a Satellite Award, the Hollywood Cinematographer of the Year Award, and the Women in Film Kodak Vision Award in 2008; *Shattered Glass* for director Billy Ray, starring Hayden Christensen and Peter Sarsgaard, which earned her a nomination for best cinematography at the Independent Spirit Awards; *Lantana* starring Anthony La Paglia, Barbara Hershey, and Geoffrey Rush; *Parklands* starring Cate Blanchett; *Love Serenade* directed by Shirley Barrett, which won the Camera d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival; and *Red Riding Hood* for director Catherine Hardwicke.

Recently shooting *Tracks* for director John Curran, starring Mia Wasikowska, and *Truth* starring Cate Blanchette and Robert Redford directed by James Vanderbilt.

She also shot two of the glamorous *Chanel No.5* mini films starring Nicole Kidman, and Gisele Bündchen directed by Baz Luhrmann.

Walker is widely regarded for her passion, and an understanding of how cinematography can capture and convey to an audience the most essential aspects of storytelling. In 2006 she was named one of the *Variety*'s "10 Cinematographers to Watch." She is currently based in Los Angeles.

Wynn Thomas (Production Designer) started working in theatre as a teenager growing up in Philadelphia. Upon graduation from Boston University, Thomas went to New York where he was a production designer for the Public Theatre and the Negro Ensemble Company before transitioning into film production. Thomas apprenticed under production designer Patrizia von Brandenstein (Academy Award® winner for *Amadeus*, 1984) before starting a longtime collaboration with director Spike Lee. Thomas and Lee have worked together for over 20 years, on projects including *She's Gotta Have It* (1986), *Do the Right Thing* (1989), *Mo' Better Blues* (1990), *Malcolm X* (1992) and *Inside Man* (2006). Other credits include Robert De Niro's directorial debut *A Bronx Tale* (1993), *To Wong Foo Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar* (1995), Tim Burton's *Mars Attacks!* (1996), *Wag the Dog* (1997), *Analyze This* (1999), Ron Howard's *A Beautiful Mind* (2001) and *Cinderella Man* (2005), *Get Smart* (2008), *All Good Things* (2010) and *The Odd Life of Timothy Green*.

Renée Ehrlich Kalfus (Costume Designer) is an award-winning costume designer of more than 28 feature films. Kalfus graduated from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University with a degree in fine arts, and her background in painting has influenced her approach as a costume designer.

She began her career styling for television commercials, and later moved into film, working with the director Lasse Hallström on *Once Around*. Kalfus went on to collaborate with Hallström on five films, including *Chocolat*, which earned her BAFTA and Costume Design Guild award nominations for Best Costume Design.

Her work showcases the diversity of her range, including period films such as *Snow Falling on Cedars* and *The Cider House Rules*; the gritty dramas of *Dead Man Walking*, *The Taking of Pelham 123*, and *The Life of David Gale*; and glamorous romantic comedies like *Friends with Benefits*, *What Happens in Vegas*, and *Baby Mama*. Recognizing her achievement throughout her career, New York Women in Film and Television honored Kalfus at its Designing Women awards in 2014. She is a powerful storyteller, shaping characters through her designs.

Peter Teschner (Editor) is an American film editor. He is best known as the editor of comedy films such as *Road Trip*, *Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story*, *Borat*, and *Going the Distance*. Teschner is a 1980 graduate of Columbia College Chicago and in 2006 he was honored with the school's Alumni of the Year award for his *Outstanding Contribution to a Field of Motion Picture Editing*.