

The Thea Awards

Passion, vision, story, technology, creativity, courage, resolve – all these and more are required to blend seamlessly to produce extraordinary venues and events capable of engaging large and small audiences locally or around the world. Like the TEA itself, the Thea Awards were created to bring recognition to such achievements, and to the talent and personal excellence within the themed entertainment and experience design industry worldwide.



A Brief History

which half of the ladies in the audience participated (Marty has a reputation for high turnover among his administrative assistants).

In Thea's third year (1996) the Awards for Outstanding Achievement (AOA) were introduced, expanding the Thea program into a multi-award event. Ten AOA Awards were distributed and several breakthrough traditions were established that have come to characterize the Thea Awards:

From the start of the TEA in 1991, the TEA's founder, Monty Lunde, felt our industry represented some of the most accomplished yet under-recognized talents working in all of entertainment. Therefore, after launching the TEA and guiding it safely through the first critical years, Monty's next priority was the creation of an award that would bring recognition and prestige to the people of our industry. The first TEA Awards Judging Committee was comprised of Bob Rogers, Pat Scanlon and Barry Howard. In early 1994 they met, and the choice of an honoree was easy: industry veteran, Harrison "Buzz" Price would be the first recipient of the only award that year - the TEA Lifetime Achievement Award.

The name of the award is a play on three words: the first is "Thea," the Greek goddess from whom all light emanates. Thea was the mother of Helios (the sun), Eos (the dawn), and Selene (the moon). The second key word is "Theater," a word that derives from the goddess Thea. The third word, of course, is TEA, the name of our association. The original Thea and AOA (Award for Outstanding Achievement) trophies were designed by Barry Howard and Jeremy Railton. The new Thea, which debuted in 2001 and was updated in 2004, was designed by Zofia Kostyrko.

The first year's ceremony was produced by Ron Miziker of Miziker & Company, and the event was coordinated by Jana Love with Monty Lunde serving as Chairman of the Awards Committee and master of ceremonies. It was held at the Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles and was attended by over 200 people. The evening was partly a tribute and partly an affectionate "roast" of Buzz, although at least one speaker came with the impression that it was a men-only "smoker" and mortified the guest of honor and the ladies present with his remarks. Overall, the evening was magnificent. Everyone was so astonished by the sight of each other in tuxedos and evening gowns that we agreed to do it again.

Nineteen ninety-five was our second year. Walt Disney Imagineering's Marty Sklar was honored and again, the evening was held at the Biltmore, but in a bigger room with about 350 people in attendance. Again, the format was a series of speakers, roasting and saluting the honoree. One of the highlights was a parade of "Marty's former secretaries" in

The objective of the Thea Awards is simple: To find excellence and celebrate it. It is not a judgment of winners and losers. The achievements selected for awards are chosen because they represent the excellence found throughout the themed entertainment and experience design industry. This philosophy guides the entire Thea program and process.

There are no surprise announcements, no secret names in envelopes, no division of attendees into winners and losers at the Thea Awards Gala. Everyone walks in a winner and leaves as winner. This Thea tradition brings our industry together for a completely positive evening. Membership in the TEA is not a requirement or a consideration in judging. Excellence is our only standard.

Within the AOA Awards there are no set categories. The TEA is free to honor several achievements in the same category or skip categories, as the year's achievements warrant. The AOA Award honors the entire achievement and everyone who worked on the achievement, rather than individuals, such as Best director or Best Art Director. We ask the owner of the achievement to provide a list of credits and to designate the individuals who will come to the podium to collect the award on behalf of all the people and companies who contributed to the achievement. These two Thea traditions remove the TEA from the impossible task of trying to determine or arbitrate credits (an issue in which the TEA has no legal standing - at least not yet) and it spreads the sense of honor and accomplishment to all who worked on the achievement. Thus the Thea Awards become an event that brings us together as an industry and creative community.

To receive an Award, the owner of the achievement must publish credits. In this way, the Thea Awards established the very first standards and requirements for credits in our industry. This tradition was immediately embraced by Disney, Universal and many of the large companies that had previously resisted publishing credits. The creation of our industry's first credits may be Thea's greatest accomplishment to date.

Also noteworthy, in 1996, the TEA gave a special AOA for Outstanding Individual to Monty Lunde, the founder of the association. In 1997, two additional special categories for the

AOA Award were created. Excellence on a Limited Budget (assuring annual recognition for achievements created for less than \$5 million) and the Thea Classic Award, honoring one achievement each year that has stood the test of time.

The Thea Awards Gala has become THE social event of the year within our industry. In spite of limited budgets, our all-volunteer production teams comprised of enthusiastic TEA members have created a series of great awards shows - each one topping the previous. At our 13th Annual Thea Awards, sponsored by Economics Research Associates, we honor a wide range of projects, from live spectacles in Japan to simulated experiences in England, from aquariums to zoos, from skiing in the desert to baking bread at the wharf, from new attractions at major theme parks to community-based children's facilities. The Thea Awards honor the experiences our industry can provide worldwide.

The Thea Awards are now internationally recognized as the equivalent of an Oscar in the themed

entertainment and experience-design industry. Each year, over a hundred highly qualified achievements from all over the world compete for between 12 and 18 awards.

But the overriding objective remains to find excellence and celebrate it - a search for projects that call attention to the excellence that exists throughout our industry. As we look to the future, the Thea Awards will continue to grow, evolve and change, never forgetting their original objective of bringing recognition to achievement, talent and professional personal excellence within our expanding industry.



Tonight, March 3, 2007, at our 13th Annual Thea Awards Gala, sponsored by Economics Research Associates, the TEA continues to build on its foundations of recognizing excellence within an industry that has expanded and diversified well beyond its theme park origins and now reaches and inspires wherever and whenever audiences gather and visitors arrive. We are glad to see you here and hope you enjoy this very special evening.

13th Annual Thea Awards

LifeTime Achievement: Bob Rogers

Classic: Madame Tussauds London

Awards for Outstanding Achievement

Ashes and Snow

BELIEVE at SeaWorld

Boudin at the Wharf

Expedition Everest

The Georgia Aquarium

The Great Glass Elevator

Kidspace Children's Museum

"Move, Life" Toyota Pavilion

The Real-Cost Cafe

Robots: The Interactive Exhibit

Ski Dubai

U-505 Submarine Exhibit

Zoomazium