

OLYMPIA DUKAKIS • 1931-2021

Actress won an Oscar for 'Moonstruck'

BY BROOKE LEFFERTS
Associated Press

MAPLEWOOD, N.J. — Olympia Dukakis, the veteran stage and screen actress whose flair for maternal roles helped her win an Oscar as Cher's mother in the romantic comedy "Moonstruck," has died. She was 89.

Dukakis died Saturday morning in her home in New York City, according to Allison Levy, her agent at Innovative Artists. A cause of death was not immediately released.

Dukakis won her Oscar through a surprising chain of circumstances, beginning with author Nora Ephron's recommendation that she play Meryl Streep's mother in the film version of

Ephron's book "Heartburn." Dukakis got the role, but her scenes were cut from the film. To make it up to her, director Mike Nichols cast her in his hit play "Social Security." Director Norman Jewison saw her in that role and cast her in "Moonstruck."

Dukakis won the Oscar for best supporting actress and Cher took home the trophy for best actress.

She referred to her 1988 win as "the year of the Dukakii" because it was also the year Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis, her cousin, was the Democratic Party's presidential nominee. At the ceremony, she held her Oscar high over her head and called out: "OK, Michael, let's go!"



Dukakis, who was born in Lowell, Massachusetts, had yearned to be an actress from an early age and had hoped to study drama in college. Her Greek immigrant parents insisted she pursue a

Actress Olympia Dukakis, winner of a Golden Globe for "Best Performance in a Supporting Role," and Cher, winner of the "Best Performance by an Actress in a musical or comedy," hold the awards they received for performances in "Moonstruck" at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in 1988.

Reed Saxon/AP

more practical education, so she studied physical therapy at Boston University on a scholarship from the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.

After earning her bachelor's degree, she worked at an understaffed hospital in Marmet, West Virginia, and at the Hospital for Contagious Diseases in Boston.

But the lure of the theater eventually led her to study drama at Boston University.

It was a shocking change, she told an interviewer in 1988, noting that she had gone from the calm world of science to one where students routinely screamed at the teachers.

"I thought they were all nuts," she said. "It was wonderful!"

Her recent projects included the 2019 TV miniseries "Tales of the City" and the upcoming film "Not to Forget."

But the stage was her first love. "My ambition wasn't to win the Oscar," she commented after her "Moonstruck" win. "It was to play the great parts."

Capitol

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The clock was started on Jan. 19 and doesn't stop for nights, weekends, holidays, COVID-19 shutdowns, Senate walk-outs or House slow-downs.

And when it is over, it's over. All bills left are dead. Ideas can come back the next session, but have to start over again.

Third witching hour: The Legislature has its own automatic Spring cleaning with four "witching hours" during the session that kill off bills stalled in committees. House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, estimated early in the session that up to 4,000 bills and resolutions were introduced. Hundreds of bills stuck in the maze of the Legislature's 43 committees were culled by earlier deadlines. The next witching hour is May 14 when bills

must be scheduled for a final committee vote in the second chamber (House bills in the Senate, and vice versa). There are a few "safe harbors" for legislation. Bills in Rules, Revenue and joint (House-Senate) committees are exempt from the deadlines.

Legislation Resurrection: When legislative leaders reverse themselves and want one of the dead bills to move forward after all, the job is done with a "gut and stuff" move. A bill that has moved forward can be sent to the Rules or another deadline-exempt committee where its entire contents are removed (gut) and an amendment becomes the entire text of the bill. Look for the move as the Legislature scrambles when the end of the session gets close.

Encore, Encore! Sept. 20 is the start date for the special session of the Legislature to

deal with overdue redistricting maps. Lawmakers received an letter (Invitation? Summons?) from leadership last week.

East meets West: Sept. 20 is also the 30th anniversary of East Germany and West Germany voting to unify into one nation. Getting western Oregon and eastern Oregon to unify might be a harder trick. The Cascades make for a much prettier Wall than the one that stood in Berlin.

Feeling for an economic pulse: On Friday, the preliminary June state revenue forecast was sent to key government planners. The report won't be made public until May 19. But an early version was sent to the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors and the state Department of Administrative Services. The quarterly reports measure how much money the state is taking in and spending.

Wrong way repeat? The revenue forecasts are a best educated guess — and sometimes prove wrong. The June 2020 report forecast a sharp recession that would require major cuts by the state. By the next report in September 2020, the fiscal storm had disappeared as strong tax revenues from higher earning residents came in. Aided by a major infusion of federal aid, the state has been swimming in cash so far this year.

How fat a wallet: Oregonians voted yes in November on Measure 107, closing a court-imposed loophole that campaign contributions were protected activity under Oregon's expansive freedom of speech guarantees in the state constitution. Two bills were introduced this session to put numbers on the limits. House Bills 2680 and 3343 are both parked in Rules with no addi-

tional action scheduled. The differences between the two bills come down to the size of the biggest donation allowed. The Legislature may punt on the issue and send it as a referendum on the 2022 ballot. After saying "yes" to limits, voters would be asked "how much is too much?"

Empty executive office pending: With Gov. Kate Brown unable to run because of term limits, the 2022 governor's race will be the first since 2010 without an incumbent on the ballot. Democrats have won every election for the state's top job since 1986. It's not surprising that "every Democrat who can fog a glass," as one wag recently put it, is rumored as eyeing the May 2022 primary. Candidates can't officially file for office until Sept. 9, and can wait to jump in as late as March 8, 2022.

GOP for governor: Specu-

lation of which Republicans might join what recent history has shown as a quixotic run for governor has started early. Bud Pierce, the GOP nominee in the 2016 special election for governor won by Kate Brown, has announced he plans to run. Oregon Catalyst, a popular conservative website, recently posted an online poll asking readers to pick from among five names getting some early buzz as possible GOP standard-bearers. Sandy Mayor Stan Pulliam came out on top. Others included Pierce, Sen. Dallas Heard, R-Roseburg (who is also the Oregon Republican Party chair), Rep. Bill Post, R-Keizer, and Clackamas County Commissioner Tootie Smith. Candidates can't officially file for office until Sept. 9, but expect more straw polls across the political spectrum over the summer.

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