



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

**AFI ESTABLISHES
CHARLTON HESTON AWARD**

Distinguished Actor to Receive First Honor

LOS ANGELES, CA, SEPTEMBER 24, 2003—The American Film Institute (AFI) established a new award in honor of its Chair Emeritus Charlton Heston, named the AFI Charlton Heston Award, it was announced today by Howard Stringer, Chair of the AFI Board of Trustees and Jean Picker Firstenberg, Director and CEO of AFI. This award was established to acknowledge individuals who have made distinguished contributions to both the film and television communities and to the American Film Institute.

The first recipient of this honor, Charlton Heston, was presented with the award in his home during a private ceremony on September 23, 2003, attended by AFI Founding Trustee Jack Valenti and AFI Director and CEO Jean Picker Firstenberg.

Heston was honored for his leadership as President of the Screen Actors Guild (1965-1971); Chairman of the AFI Board of Trustees (1971-1982); President of AFI (1983-2002) and for his career as an international movie star and actor in film, television and stage.

Stringer commented, "The AFI Board of Trustees wanted to acknowledge Chuck's contribution to the film and television communities and to AFI. For decades, he has been a major presence in movies and television around the world and his strong spirit of commitment to AFI lives on through this honor."

Heston was recently honored by President George W. Bush with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award, presented to men and women of high achievement in the arts and entertainment, public service, science, education, athletics, business and other fields. Heston is known for his portrayals of the most compelling

dramatic figures: Moses, Judah Ben-Hur, Michelangelo, General Andrew Jackson and Captain George Taylor.

About the AFI Charlton Heston Award

Established by the AFI Board of Trustees in 2003, the board, at its discretion, will select an individual to receive the Charlton Heston Award who has made distinguished contributions to both the film and television communities and to the AFI.

About the American Film Institute

AFI is the preeminent organization dedicated to advancing and preserving the art of film, television and other forms of the moving image. AFI trains the next generation of filmmakers at its world-renowned Conservatory, provides film preservation leadership and explores new digital technologies in moviemaking. AFI's New Media Ventures programs bring together the creative and digital communities, as the department seeks to develop a literacy program for the 21st century, helping young people learn to read and write screens of all sizes—cinema, television, computer and the Internet. With AFI ON SCREEN, the institute is the largest nonprofit exhibitor in the US, with programs at the AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival (AFI FEST); the AFI National Film Theater at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC; and the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center in Silver Spring, Maryland. A 49,000 square foot complex with three theatres—one historic, two new state-of-the-art stadium-style theatres—the AFI Silver exhibits film and video generally unavailable elsewhere in the region. AFI's annual almanac for the 21st century, **AFI AWARDS**, honors the most outstanding motion pictures and television programs of the year. **AFI's 100 Years . . . 100 Movies, 100 Stars, 100 Laughs, 100 Thrills, 100 Passions and 100 Heroes & Villains** have ignited extraordinary public interest in classic American movies. During the past 31 years, AFI's Life Achievement Award has become the highest honor for a career in film. More information about AFI can be found by visiting its Web site, located at www.AFI.com.

###

CONTACT:

Liza deVilla, AFI, 323.856.7896, ldevilla@AFI.com or
Allison Ravenscroft, Linda Dozoretz Communications, 323.656.4499,
allison@ldcomm.com

