



## **"In their Own Words"**

### **ROBERT MONTGOMERY. Screen Actors Guild President 1935 - 1938**

"Few of us realize that we have founded an institution. It does not belong to any group or clique of actors; it belongs to all of us. It does not even belong to the present generation of actors. If we have built solidly, it belongs to the future as well as the present, not only to those now playing, but also to those who have not yet made their entrance upon the scene."

- excerpted from statement to the Board of Directors, October 1937

### **EDDIE CANTOR. Screen Actors Guild President 1933 - 1935**

"I am only a small part of the movement, one individual. When I am gone and forgotten, the Guild will still be here. Other willing hands will take up the torch and carry it forward. If you stand together, you cannot lose. Actors cannot be beaten except by actors. The Guild is for you, and you must be for the Guild. Stand together."

- spoken at May 13, 1934 membership meeting.

### **RALPH MORGAN. First Screen Actors Guild President 1933, 1938 - 1940**

"I have great faith in the sense of justice inherent in my fellow player. I believe he wants to and will fight to correct any injustice so long as he feels confident that this fight will be waged cleanly and in keeping with the high calling of his profession... My good wishes to you all, and my prayers and hopes that our organization may grow to be a monument of justice and good faith to all in our glorious profession."

- letter to Board March 27, 1937.

### **NOEL MADISON - Founding Member #5**

"When we formed the Guild, several of us went through a bad time and many doors were closed to us - doors that previously had been wide open. If I had the last eleven years to live over again, I wouldn't deviate one millimeter from the path I took."

- *Screen Actor* magazine May 1944 p. 10.

### **BRADLEY PAGE - Founding member # 16**

"When Equity was organized, the talking picture was only dreamed of - so we could not be blamed for not looking ahead to its potentialities and doing something about it; which resulted in that organization's failure in California some years ago and our work of organizing the Actor's Guild at the present time. Radio and its ally - television are an actuality however, now. And an important part of the entertainment world. We should not overlook the possibility of radio and television absorbing the picture industry a few years from now, as the talking picture did the legitimate theatre. This may seem like a 'bell the cat' idea right now - and a large programme for us at this early stage of the game, but circumstances, and perhaps good fortune, have placed us in a spot where we can benefit by mistakes made by other organizations and I beg of you all to consider - and remember that things happen awfully fast these days." - letter to Board, July 20, 1933.

### **GENE AUTRY**

"I'm a strong believer in the Screen Actors Guild. I've been a union man during my whole career."

**LEW AYRES**

"We were finally treated like human beings when the Guild got its contract. There was a big difference in our working conditions."

**BARBARA BARONDESS**

"In those golden years of Hollywood, women were treated like disposable Kleenex. My experience started at MGM in 1933. I made two dozen pictures in five years and my hair color changed in each one. We had nothing to say about our appearance. I had to lose weight, although I was a size 8. The strain of the working conditions was almost beyond endurance. I don't know how we survived making *Eight Girls in a Boat* (1934) for Paramount. We had to jump into a cold lake 20 times for a take. SAG was born while I was making *Change of Heart* (1934) with Ginger Rogers, Shirley Temple, and Kenneth Thomson. Thomson became SAG's first executive, and we all joined. Now actors have choices, which is better than being a ball in a roulette wheel, like we were."

**MARY BRIAN**

"I can remember hearing stories of Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi recruiting fellow actors on the sets of their Universal horror movies. You can imagine the persuasive spectacle of Frankenstein's monster and Dracula in full make-up, bringing you an application and urging, "Join the Guild now!"

**FRANK "JUNIOR" COGHLAN**

"I worked in a movie at Paramount, and we kids worked from 8:00 a.m. to half past midnight. That would be impossible now. When SAG came in, they enforced the rules to make it a financial penalty if the studios didn't give us meal breaks and hours off between calls. In 1937 I was 21 and knew that a new union was being formed for actors, so I lined up at the old Hollywood Legion Stadium during that crucial strike meeting, paid my \$15 initiation fee and walked away a member of SAG."

**NANETTE FABRAY**

"One of my first memories is when we were out some place in the Valley outside of Los Angeles for a shoot and it was hot and I had to wear a coat and there were no bathroom facilities. I think kids forget, wipe those memories out, but I sure can remember that stress. But things changed after the union was formed. Now, it's like SAG's been a part of my life forever."

**JAMES STEWART**

"The year 1945 was a landmark time for the Guild and its members. It was then that some of us were able to take more control of our careers, thanks to the de Havilland decision, which limited studio actors' contracts at seven years, including suspension and war-time duty. Eventually, motion picture actors were able to participate in the the profits of their movies. The Screen Actors Guild has benefited the actors in our industry in so many ways."