

Obituary

Hal Holbrook, prolific actor who played Twain, dies at 95

NEW YORK, Feb. 3, (AP) — **Hal Holbrook**, the award-winning character actor who toured the world for more than 50 years as Mark Twain in a one-man show and uttered the immortal advice “Follow the money” in the classic political thriller “All the President’s Men,” has died. He was 95.

Holbrook died on Jan. 23 in Beverly Hills, California, his representative, Steve Rohr, told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Actors across the spectrum mourned Holbrook’s passing, including Bradley Whitford, who called him an “incredible actor” and Viola Davis, who wrote “RIP to the always wonderful Hal Holbrook.”

Holbrook pursued a busy career in theater, television and movies, winning five Emmys and a Tony. His more than two dozen film credits ranged from Steven Spielberg’s “Lincoln” to Oliver Stone’s “Wall Street.” He was a steady presence on TV as well, having appeared on such shows as “The West Wing,” “Grey’s Anatomy” and “Bones.”

But his most famous movie role was as a key source for Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward (played by Robert Redford) in the 1976 adaptation of “All the President’s Men,” the bestselling account by Woodward and fellow Post reporter Carl Bernstein about their investigation of Richard Nixon’s administration and the Watergate scandal that led to his resignation.

Holbrook played the mysterious informant “Deep Throat” (later revealed to be FBI official Mark Felt) who provided key information to Woodward. The most famous tip, uttered from the shadows of a parking garage — “Follow the money” — became an instant catchphrase but was never said in real life. The line was invented by screenwriter William Goldman.

“Follow the money” may have been his most famous film words, but

An incredible and versatile actor

Twain was his defining role. The association began in 1954 when an instructor at Ohio’s Denison University gave Holbrook the role as part of a thesis assignment.

Holbrook and his first wife, Ruby Johnson, later created a two-person show, playing characters from Shakespeare to Twain. After their daughter, Victoria, was born, he started working on a one-man Twain show while working on the soap opera “The Brighter Day.”



Holbrook

Performed

Holbrook, raised in Cleveland, was 29 when he first performed as Twain (who was portrayed as 70) and eventually developed the role into a two-act, one-man show called “Mark Twain Tonight!,” taking it to schools, nightclubs and theaters. He took it to Broadway three times — 1966, 1977 and 2005 — and won a Tony Award as best dramatic actor for the 1966 version.

“The truth is that he’s been wonderful company,” Holbrook told The Plain Dealer newspaper in 2017. “It would be an understatement to say I like him. He never ceases to amaze me. Even after all these years, I’m still stunned by his insight into the human character. So much of what he had to say more than 100 years ago is right on the money for today.”

In 1959, after years of honing his material in small towns, Holbrook debuted his Twain at an off-Broadway theater in New York to high critical praise. “Mr. Holbrook’s material is uproarious, his ability to

hold an audience by acting is brilliant,” said The New York Times. The New Yorker called it a “dazzling display of virtuosity.”

Holbrook would tour as Twain — with the writer’s familiar white suit and white hair — whenever he wasn’t busy with other acting jobs. He would update the show to fit the times and performed the role by his account some 2,200 times. He hung up the white suit in 2017.

“He did a ton of work over the years, never less than first-rate, but the Twain performances approached perfection, and they will stay with me forever,” tweeted Michael McKean.

He was meticulous in his preparations, taking as long as 3 1/2 hours to don his makeup and insisting on oversized stage furniture so that, at 6 feet tall, he wouldn’t appear larger than the 5-foot-8 1/2-inch Twain was. He read books by and about the author and scoured newspaper files in search of interviews with Twain and stories about his lecture tours.

During a performance on the open-sided stage at Wolf Trap near Vienna, Virginia, lightning flashed and thunder cracked just as Holbrook reached toward the humidor for a cigar. He scuttled backward. A roar of laughter followed. Holbrook looked out over his glasses at the audience. When he could be heard again, he spoke: “He wasn’t talking to you.”

Over the years, Holbrook took “Mark Twain Tonight!” to numerous foreign countries, including Saudi Arabia. His audiences included Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Carter.

When he wasn’t portraying Twain, Holbrook showed impressive versatility. He was Burt Reynolds’ crotchety father-in-law in the 1990s TV series “Evening Shade.” He appeared as Abraham Lincoln in two different miniseries on the 16th president and won one of his Emmys for the title role in the 1970-71 TV series “The Senator.”

Variety



This image released by the Sundance Institute shows a scene from the documentary ‘Summer Of Soul (Or, When The Revolution Could Not Be Televised)’ by Ahmir ‘Questlove’ Thompson. The film documentary grand jury prize and audience award at Sundance Film Festival Awards. (AP)

Film

Boseman earns 2 noms for NAACP Image Awards

‘CODA,’ ‘Summer’ win Sundance Awards

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 3, (AP) — Questlove accepted his documentary grand jury prize and audience award from his car on the way to work and “CODA” director Sian Heder accepted her top awards in American Sign Language from her own home with her kids by her side and her husband filming. The 2021 Sundance Film Festival Awards were unlike any before and had filmmakers calling in from around the world Tuesday night to cap off the festival’s first virtual edition.

“CODA,” Heder’s film about the hearing child of deaf adults who is trying to carve out her own life apart from her family, won the top awards of the evening including the grand jury prize, the directing award, the audience award and a special ensemble prize.

“I’m going to cry,” Heder said. “The process of making this movie was so incredible and I think we all came out of the making of the film with so much love for each other.”

Her film, a breakout of the festival, sold to Apple TV+ for a reported \$25 million. Heder had her kids and husband join her for the directing honor.

Questlove, who made his directing debut with “Summer of Soul (...or When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)” at the largely forgotten 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival, was caught a little more off guard and got word his first award, the audience prize, from the passenger seat of a car.

“Wait a minute, this is too soon,” he said. “I didn’t even know this was a contest, yo.”

His film also won the grand jury prize. “I’m so overwhelmed right now,” Questlove said. “My purpose and my goal was to just not drop the ball and just to make my people proud of me. And I’m so speechless right now.”

Dash Shaw picked up the NEXT Innovator award for his animated fantasy “Cryptozoo,” which Magnolia acquired for release.

“It’s been such a total honor to be part of Sundance this year,” Shaw said.

The world cinema documentary grand jury prize went to “Flee,” a hand-drawn animated film about a refugee directed by Jonas Poher Rasmussen and executive produced by Riz Ahmed and Nikolaj Coster-

Waldau. Neon, the shop that brought Oscar-winner “Parasite” to the U.S., acquired “Flee” for distribution.

“Hive,” from first time filmmaker Blerita Basholli, was awarded the world cinema grand jury prize and the audience award. The film follows a woman after the disappearance of her husband in Kosovo. “Writing With Fire,” a documentary about India’s only all-female newspaper, won the world cinema documentary audience award.

Host Patton Oswalt called the awards, “the Oscars with bangs.”

Oswalt hosted the virtual proceedings from a black leather couch on which he amusingly feigned the audience “catching” him in conversation with an off-screen companion, musing how Marlon Brando faked his death, about not getting in a drinking contest with the Coen brothers, the perils of lending a credit card to Parker Posey, how he lost his deposit after Luptia Nyong’o crashed his snowmobile, and that one time, “I was naked, Soderbergh was naked and then Scorsese walked in ...”

He too had a cameo from his own daughter, who came in near the end to tell him that her favorite actors are Emma Watson and Millie Bobby Brown.

“Oh, and you,” she added.

The 2021 Sundance Film Festival runs through Wednesday.

With his final two performances, the late **Chadwick Boseman** earned two NAACP Image Awards nominations Tuesday, while “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom” could make its presence felt at next month’s ceremony.

Boseman scored nods for his work in the Netflix films “Da 5 Bloods” and “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom.” The actor, who starred in the blockbuster Marvel film “Black Panther,” died at 43 last year after privately battling colon cancer.

“Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom” came away with nine nominations. The film delves into the story of blues singer **Ma Rainey**, who joins her band during a turbulent recording session at a Chicago music studio in 1927.

The nominees were announced on the organization’s Instagram page by **Chloe Bailey**, **Anika Noni Rose** and **Nicco Annan**, along with **T.C. Carson** and **Erika Alexander**.

Netflix emerged with a leading 48 nominations. Besides the two films Boseman starred in, the streaming giant released other projects like “Bridgerton” and “#blackAF.”

HBO received 25 nominations.

Regina King, who won an Academy Award in 2019, has created some Oscar buzz with her feature film directorial debut in “One Night in Miami,” which earned four nominations. The Amazon Studios film tells the story of a meeting between **Malcolm X**, **Muhammad Ali**, **Jim Brown** and **Sam Cooke** in a hotel room that turned into a discussion about their roles in the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

King will compete for entertainer of the year against **Tyler Perry**, **Viola Davis**, **Trevor Noah** and **D-Nice**, the deejay who created a virtual remedy for pandemic lockdown blues with Homeschool at Club Quarantine on his Instagram.

“One Night in Miami” will compete for outstanding motion picture along with “Bad Boys for Life,” “Da 5 Bloods,” “Jingle Jangle: A Christmas Journey” and “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom.”

LeBron James, **Stacey Abrams**, **Debbie Allen**, **April Ryan** and **Tamika Mallory** were nominated in the social justice impact category.

In music, **Beyoncé** scored six nominations in the recording categories, including two for outstanding music video/visual album with “Black is King” and “Brown Skin Girl.”

The nominees for outstanding album include **Alicia Key**’s “Alicia,” Brandy’s “b7,” **John Legend**’s “Big-ger Love,” **Ledisi**’s “The Wild Card” and “Chilombo” by **Jhene Aiko**.

HarperCollins Publishers led with nine nominations in the literary categories.

The awards honoring entertainers and writers of color will air on CBS on March 27 at 8 p.m. EST. The awards will also simulcast on BET, MTV, VH1, MTV2, BET HER and LOGO.

DAHO FALLS, Idaho: An Idaho man who rode to fame on TikTok after casually singing “Dreams” by **Fleetwood Mac** and drinking cranberry juice while longboarding will have a symbol of his success on display at the Museum of Idaho.

Nathan Apodaca, also known as **Doggface**, signed a bottle of Ocean Spray cranberry juice for the museum during an event on



Apodaca



Biden

Tuesday, the Post-Register reported. In exchange, Apodaca and his family received membership cards to the museum.

Tom Hayes, the CEO of Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc., says the bottle will now be on display and become the latest entry in the museum’s archives.

“We think of museums as being full of old things, but history is

what happened even a moment ago, and we are really trying to celebrate the recent past of our community,” museum curator **Carrie Anderson Athay** said.

Since posting the viral video on social media four months ago, Apodaca was asked to record a video for President **Joe Biden**’s virtual “Parade Across America” on Inauguration Day and saw the city

of Idaho Falls officially declare a “Nathan Apodaca Day” last week.

“I’ve been coming to this museum since I was a kid. Coming in with my kids and seeing something that has my signature on it, it’s so mind-blowing,” he said.

A second signed bottle of cranberry juice is scheduled to be auctioned off as a fundraiser for the museum’s programs, officials said. (AP)