



IN MEMORIAM

Delia N. Salvi
Professor of Film, Theater and Television
UC Los Angeles
1927 - 2015

Delia N. Salvi, 87, a professor emerita in the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television (TFT), accomplished actress, artist and author, died March 1 in Los Angeles after a brief illness.

Salvi, who taught at UCLA for 42 years, was known for her instruction on acting and the direction of actors. She introduced many filmmaking students, including Justin Lin and Alexander Payne, to the art of directing actors. She also directed several plays at UCLA TFT and conducted master acting classes in Oregon and Washington as well as in the Netherlands, Belgium, Canada, France, Israel, Germany, Italy and Spain.

She studied with Lee Strasberg in Manhattan and was a lifelong member of The Actors Studio where she was not only a student but also a teacher, and where she performed and served on its audition committee. Among the actors she worked with were Geena Davis, Martin Landau, Al Pacino, Mark Rydell, Shelly Winters and Dianne Wiest, as well as "Orphans" playwright Lyle Kessler and director Joe Sargent. She also had numerous roles in film and television. Salvi, who started teaching at UCLA in 1969, retired in 2011.

Born in Italy, Salvi grew up in New York City. She used to say that she was "born in a trunk." She grew up watching from the wings as her mother, Italian theater star Renatta Vanni, performed on stage. She moved to California when her mother was brought to the West Coast by Warner Brothers to star in the William Wellman movie "Westward the Women."

Salvi received her Master of Fine Arts degree in 1965 and a Ph.D. in 1969 from the UCLA College of Fine Arts, from which the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television emerged as a stand-alone professional school.

In her early years as a lecturer at the College of Fine Arts, she was the only faculty member teaching both theater and film/TV classes for a time. When TFT separated from the College of Fine Arts, she continued to teach in both departments. Eventually she chose to only teach in the Department of Film and Television, now known as the Department of Film, Television and Digital Media, after creating highly successful courses that taught film directors how to communicate with and direct actors. Hundreds of students learned from Salvi and have taken that experience into their professional lives. Her book "Friendly Enemies: The Director-Actor Relationship" is based upon her teachings and techniques. It was published in 2003 and has been translated into Italian.

As an actress, Salvi had numerous credits, including "From Here to Eternity" (1953), as well as roles in Anne Bancroft's "Fatso" (1980) and "The Last Married Couple in America" (1980), by the late award-winning director Gilbert Cates, the founding dean of TFT. A little known fact about Salvi is that she was a talented artist who painted in oil and watercolor; she also sculpted in bronze. Several of her pieces have been on display in a variety of venues.

Salvi never married or had children as she was devoted to her craft; she considered her students as her children, said a friend. Many frequently came back to visit with her. She is survived by her cousin, Arnaldo Delehay of Naples, Italy.