

# Cocoanut Grove Throings Give Stars Gay Ovation

## Academy Awarding at Ambassador Draws Film Notables in Great Number and Sightseers

BY EDWIN SCHALLERT

The most glamorous of Hollywood's annual functions found a new setting last night in Cocoanut Grove of the Ambassador, which probably has never before been given over to such a serious event.

It was the first time in seven years that the locale of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awards banquet had been changed. During that period all the dinners were held at the Biltmore Bowl.

More than 1700 persons jammed the Grove to capacity.

Results were naturally out of the ordinary. A long procession, which started about 8 p.m. and included many of the leading stars, directors and executives of the films, proceeded until 9:30. They practically ran the gantlet for a full city block, since the fans foregathered to meet them at the entrance to the hotel, and there was a continuous line of excited and applauding onlookers down the entire entranceway and up in the lobby of the hotel.

### STARS ATTRACTED

They watched with eager interest for any special and recognizable sparkler of the cinema and immediately cheered, whistled and clapped their hands.

The banquet attracted stars both new and famous in other years. Laura La Plante was among those glimpsed in the pageant of arrivals. Norma Shearer appeared with George Raft as is her wont nowadays. Jedy Lamarr arrived with Gene Markey, to whom she is married, and someone in the throng blurted out "Who is that man she's with?"

### MAY ROBSON GREETED

May Robson was greeted with enthusiasm at practically every step of the way between the files of avid sight-seers. She apparently was one of the favorites.

Significant was the fact that Hattie McDaniel was given tribute of applause when she entered the banquet room. This was before it was known that she had been tendered the palm for the best supporting performance of 1939.

Dinner was called for 8:30, but with most of the guests arriving after 9, proceedings did not mature any earlier than customary at an academy banquet. Nevertheless, Walter Wanger, the president, was right on hand well before the stated hour.

### STAR SPANGLED BANNER

It was he who made the introductions following the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" by the orchestra. First, of course Frank Capra, as the retiring president, presented Wanger.

Keynote of Wanger's speech was the democratic character of the academy. He said he hoped to extend its scope to take recognition of the work done in every creative branch of the industry that the academy should continue to preserve the ideals of the motion-picture industry should act as the defender against those who assume adversely to criticize the business as a whole, and seek to advance the influence of the films in all parts of the world.

### AMERICAN INSTITUTION

"The academy is an essentially American institution that has nothing whatsoever to do with isms and prejudices," he said. "It is our intention to maintain these principles of freedom which are essentially American in planning the future of this organization, which represent an industry and art that are in no sense subsidized, but that draw their support from the

mass public which pays for its entertainment at the box office.

"It is only by adhering to the democratic ideals we have fostered for so long that we can insure the future for motion pictures and we can well be proud of the place that the films occupy both in this country and in all other parts of the world."

### AWARDING ROUTINE

As always, the routine of the giving of the awards began with those deemed least interesting to the majority of the public and climaxed with the presentation of the statuettes for the best performances and the best productions of the year.

Darryl Zanuck, as new president of the academy research council, was allotted the duty of singling out technicians for recognition. The trophies included those for sound recording, camera work, film editing, art direction, special effects and various others.

### SHORT SUBJECT AWARDS

Then Zanuck called on Gene Buck, president of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, who gave the plaques for musical achievements.

A lighter note was then supplied by Bob Hope with the short subjects awards and Mickey Rooney, who gave a miniature statuette to Judy Garland for her "outstanding performance as a screen juvenile."

Then, as the culmination, came the best direction award to Victor Fleming, with Mervyn Le Roy making the speech of tribute, followed by Sinclair Lewis, who presented a statuette to Louis R. Foster for the best original screen play, with a note of pathos sounded when Sydney Howard, who died during the year, was mentioned for his adaptation of "Gone With the Wind."

### GRAND AWARDS

Finally, Fay Bainter, who won the best supporting performance plaque for 1938, was called upon to proffer similar trophies to Thomas Mitchell and Miss McDaniel, while Spencer Tracy, as the peak of the evening, made the presentation speech to Vivien Leigh and tendered the tribute to the absent Robert Donat.

Like the Sydney Howard award, the Irving G. Thalberg Memorial was in memory of accomplishment, with the late Douglas Fairbanks honored as the first president of the academy. This was presented by Dr. Ernest Martin Hopkins, president of Dartmouth College.

A special award was also given to Jean Hersholt, Ralph Morgan, Ralph Block and Conrad Nagel for their work in behalf of the Motion Picture Relief Fund.