

BIOGRAPHY:

CLORIS LEACHMAN

Born on April 30th, 1926, Cloris Leachman grew up in a small town near Des Moines, Iowa. As a child, she loved to act and play the piano. At age 11, she landed a job on a children's radio show from Drake University. By 17, Leachman had joined the Kendall Community Playhouse; a year later the aspiring actress headed to Northwestern University on a drama scholarship. At 20, Leachman entered a local beauty pageant on a lark and made it all the way to the Miss America finals. She was Miss Chicago in the 1946-Miss America contest. Leachman lost the beauty contest, but not her love of the spotlight. She headed for New York City and was recruited for the prestigious Actors Studio.

Leachman is an American Academy Award-, eight-time Emmy- and Golden Globe-winning actress of stage, film and television. She has won nine primetime Emmy Awards—more than any other female performer—and one Daytime Emmy Award. Cloris Leachman has starred in a wide range of theater, television and motion picture projects, creating such indelible characters as Phyllis in the TV series *Phyllis* and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, Nurse Diesel in *High Anxiety*, Frau Bluecher in *Young Frankenstein* and Ruth Popper in *The Last Picture Show* (for which she won an Oscar® and a BAFTA). Leachman has been nominated 20 times for work in Television over the years.

In 1978 she won the Sarah Siddons Award for her work in Chicago theatre. She has voice acted in numerous animated films, including *My Little Pony: The Movie*, *The Iron Giant*, and most notably as the voice of the cantankerous sky pirate Dola in Hayao Miyazaki's 1986 feature *Castle in the Sky*. Dubbed by Disney in 1998, Leachman's performance in this film received unanimous praise.

Leachman played embittered, greedy, Slavic "Grandma Ida" on the Fox sitcom *Malcolm in the Middle*, for which she won two Emmy Awards, both for Outstanding

Guest Actress in a Comedy Series (once in 2002, then again in 2006). She was nominated for the same role in that category for six consecutive years.

She was nominated for a SAG Award for her role as the wine-soaked, former jazz singer and grandmother Evelyn in the Sony feature *Spanglish* opposite Adam Sandler and Tea Leoni. That same year she appeared with Sandler again, in the remake of *The Longest Yard*. She also appeared in Kurt Russells' comedy *Sky High*.

In 2006, Leachman's performance alongside Sir Ben Kingsley and Annette Benning in the HBO special *Mrs. Harris* earned her an Emmy nomination for outstanding supporting actress in a miniseries or TV movie as well as a SAG Award nomination for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Television Movie or Miniseries.

On May 14, 2006, she was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts from Drake University.

Cloris recently wrapped three films, a remake of *The Woman* with an all-star cast that features Eva Mendez, Meg Ryan, Annette Benning, Jada Pincket Smith, Debra Messing, Candice Bergen and Bette Midler. Cloris also recently completed an independent film *American Cowslip* featuring Val Kilmer, Peter Falk, Rip Torn, Diane Ladd and Bruce Dern. And *New York I Love You* a collective work of thirteen short films shot by renowned international directors in each of the city's five boroughs, with the theme of finding love being interwoven between each of the ten-minute stories

Cloris is in the process of writing her memoir, which will be published in the fall of 2008 by Kensington Books and is currently touring the U.S. with her one-woman show CLORIS!

Leachman is a widely sought after speaker on the college circuit. Her talk's focus on the multiple aspects of her career, what acting is, how one does it, the discipline demanded to continue at the top and the special rewards that have come to her. She describes with great humor and honesty how she organized her talent to create such diverse women as her Oscar-winning performance as the emotionally barren Ruth

Popper in *The Last Picture Show*, the bizarre Frau Blucher in *Young Frankenstein*, and the Outrageous Nurse Diesel in *High Anxiety*.

Leachman's corporate events, she speaks of the high points of her career from its beginning to the current year. In 2008 she has already completed three new films, *The Women*, *American*

Cowslip and *New York I Love You*. How has the business changed? What are the differences in film-making today from yesterday?

Cloris tells of the stars, directors and writers she's worked with. She will tell of exotic places she's been and the politicians and presidents she came to know. This year she is also completing her autobiography and touring her one-woman show, she will give highlights of those activities.

As to family life she will tell her successful oscillation between her work and raising, feeding and putting her five children through school.

A schematic diagram of a bumblebee shows that it cannot fly. If you look at a schematic diagram of Cloris' life it would seem impossible to have accomplished all that she has. But, like the bumblebee, nullifying her schematics, she has blithely carried her extraordinary load. She does fly!