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## International Press Academy The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Satellite<sup>®</sup> Awards

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**CONTACT:** Mirjana Van Blaricom or Mike Szymanski  
310-271-7041, Production Office: 818-989-1589  
info@pressacademy.com

**Director Richard Donner will be honored with the IPA's Nikola Tesla Award For Recognition of Visionary Achievements in the Field of Filmmaking and the Cinematic Arts**

**LOS ANGELES, CA – December 4, 2006** – The International Press Academy (IPA) today announced that Richard Donner will receive the IPA's prestigious *Nikola Tesla Award In Recognition of Visionary Achievements in Filmmaking Technology*, to be presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Satellite<sup>™</sup> Awards on December 17<sup>th</sup> in the Imperial Ballroom of Le Méridien at Beverly Hills, California. Past recipients of the Tesla Award include George Lucas, James Cameron, Jerry Lewis, and Stan Winston.

"Richard Donner is one of the few directors working in motion pictures whose blockbuster films not only attract huge audiences but are also embraced by critics as well as his peers in the business. It is our honor to pay tribute to his contributions to the world of popular cinema," said Mirjana Van Blaricom, IPA's president.

A native New Yorker, Richard Donner was born to working class parents in the Bronx. Like many other directors, he first aspired to become an actor but after being mentored by veteran director Martin Ritt, moved into directing in the late 1950's. Donner helmed many classic television dramas like ROUTE 66, WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE, ZANE GREY THEATER and THE RIFLEMAN. His directing talent made him a very sought-after commodity, and he went on to work on a remarkable number of now classic TV series, including COMBAT, THE FUGITIVE, GET SMART, THE WILD WILD WEST, KOJAK and THE TWILIGHT ZONE, among others.

Donner made his feature film debut in 1962 with X-15, which starred a relatively obscure character actor named Charles Bronson and a very youthful Mary Tyler Moore. It was in 1976 that he directed his breakthrough movie, the classic suspense thriller, THE OMEN, followed two years later by the definitive version of SUPERMAN, starring Christopher Reeve. With SUPERMAN, Donner raised the bar on the genre by insisting that the comic book superhero should be treated with authenticity and respect for the source material rather than as camp. This approach later strongly influenced genre directors such as Bryan Singer, Sam Raimi and Tim Burton, who have made successful superhero films of their own. SUPERMAN also had the distinction of creating astonishing special effects that not only pre-dated contemporary computer-generated images but often equaled or surpassed them.

Richard Donner went on to both produce and direct a number of film successes including THE GOONIES, the LETHAL WEAPON series, SCROOGED, MAVERICK, and the legendary romance, LADYHAWKE, where he was hired by producer, Lauren Shuler Donner, who, under great duress, later agreed to marry him. He still works for her. In addition to directing, Richard Donner is a noted producer of the successful FREE WILLY series, TALES FROM THE CRYPT, and the X-MEN series.

The International Press Academy (IPA) has grown to be both the largest and most diverse association of professional entertainment journalists in the world. With an increasing membership of working press representing both domestic and foreign markets, the IPA reaches more than 500 million people globally via major print, television, radio, cable, new media outlets, and the Internet.

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[www.pressacademy.com](http://www.pressacademy.com)