



OAK PARK, IL FILM FESTIVAL

Films with an Oak Park Connection

Hollywood Opening Night
Thursday, September 11, 2025

Lake Theatre

Moonstruck

With Tribute to Oak Park Actor John Mahoney

Celebration of Independent Filmmaking

Saturday, September 13 & Sunday, September 14, 2025

Madison Street Theater

1010 Madison Street, Oak Park

Welcome!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I welcome you to the second annual Oak Park, Illinois Film Festival.

It's remarkable how much has happened since we had our first planning meeting less than two years ago. Much of that success is due to the incredible work the Board has put in.

Don't miss the display on the history of movie theaters in Oak Park created by Board member Tim Sedlacek. It's in the lobby of both Festival theatres.

Last year's festival was so successful that not only did we want to do it again, we wanted to expand. We took a chance by limiting the festival to only films with an Oak Park connection, but both years we have received more worthy films than we have time to show, even with an added day.

On surveys last year, people told us they didn't want to leave to go get meals. They would rather network, so we have increased the availability of food during the weekend. We hope you will enjoy that. Many thanks to the restaurants that have donated.

This is an exciting festival, and we hope you will take full advantage of it. On Thursday we celebrate Oak Park's connection to Hollywood with *Moonstruck*, which features Oak Parker John Mahoney.

On the weekend, explore the works of upcoming directors, enjoy discussions, and even music. Then, no matter when you attended the festival, come to our awards ceremony on Sunday.

Join us afterward (starting at 6:30 PM) for a casual reception at the Nineteenth Century Charitable Association at 178 N. Forest. Enjoy a chance to chat about what you saw at the festival and do more networking. Free admission. Cash bar.

Enjoy!

Joyce Porter
President & Founder

*Don't forget to fill out a **survey** in the lobby or online (<https://www.opilff.org/>).
Enter to win a festival hat or shirt.*

Thank You, Sponsors!

Thank you to all the supporters who helped make the festival possible.

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Thank you to all the food donors who helped support the festival.

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It Takes a Village

Putting on a festival takes a lot of work on the part of so many people.
Here are some who have shared their time and talents.

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And many others – Thank you.

Special Thanks

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**CONGRATULATIONS TO
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FILM FESTIVAL!
THANK YOU FOR
GIVING BACK TO
OUR COMMUNITY!**



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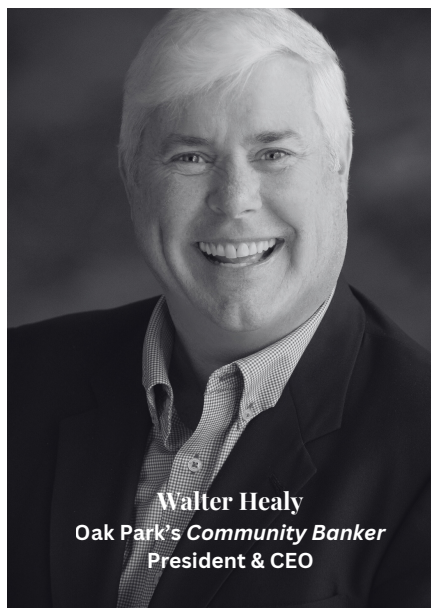


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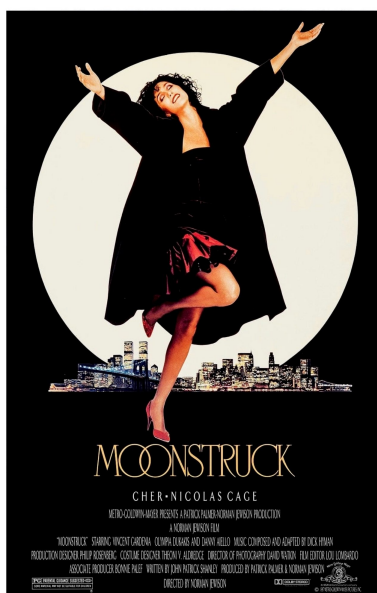
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Oak Park IL Film Festival Schedule

Thursday, September 11, 2025	
Lake Theatre	
6:30	Arrival Photos with Step-and-Repeat Festival Backdrop
7:00	Welcome by Joyce Porter. Deb Holdstein: Shining a Light on <i>Moonstruck</i>. A Tribute to John Mahoney, edited by Martha McGee. <i>Moonstruck</i> (1987) Director: Norman Jewison Writer: John Patrick Shanley Stars: Cher, Nicolas Cage, Olympia Dukakis, John Mahoney Runtime: 1 hr. 42 mins. Rated PG



Saturday, September 13, 2025	
Madison Street Theater	
11:30 AM	On-site Registration Festival Pass Pickup Miguel de León Band
Program Block 1: Life: Good Times, Bad Times (1:47)	
12:00 PM	Opening Remarks: Joyce Porter <i>The Pantone Guy</i> - 1:22:00 Director: Patrick Creadon Synopsis: At 96, Larry Herbert, "The Pantone Guy," is a visionary whose revolutionary idea to standardize color remains largely unrecognized. Oak Park Connection: Director Category: Documentary Award Finalist: Best Documentary, Best Director, Best Design Elements <i>Vince: The Punctual Vagrant</i> - 0:25:27 Director: Sarah Falkiner Synopsis: Vince, an artistic unhoused man with a penchant for punctuality, creates a piece which may help rekindle a long-lost connection. Oak Park Connection: Actress Category: Narrative Short Award Finalist: Best Actor (Mike Green) Q & A
2:30 PM	Industry Panel: Helping Actors & Directors Jennifer Goodman: Fundraising and Distribution Ryan Atkins: Fundraising and Distribution Jen Howard: Composer, Special Effects Edwin Wilson: Acting for Screen vs. Stage
3:00	Break

Program Block 2: Challenge: Finding Your Way (1:32)	
3:15 PM	<i>Holiday Hold-Up</i> - 1:29:00 Directors: Michael Moreci, Francis Claudio, Robert Stern, Michele B. McGraw Synopsis: Fired right before Christmas, six restaurant employees hatch a plan to rob their boss. Oak Park Connection: Filmmaker Category: Feature Award Finalist: Best Feature, Best Supporting Actor (Matty Ryan) <i>Path</i> - 0:03:05 Director: Ian Eastwood Synopsis: Eastwood crafts a visual interpretation with his movement of the song "Path." Oak Park Connection: Filmmaker Category: Music Videos Award Finalist: Best Music Video, Best Cinematography Q & A
5:15 PM	Dinner Break
Program Block 3: Showtime: Underground Stars	
6:00 PM	<i>Styles Make Fights - "Mad" Max Metzgar</i> - 0:08:10 Directors: Spencer Merriss, Andrew Boylan Synopsis: "Mad" Max Metzgar, a determined fighter from Oak Park, prepares for his professional MMA debut. Oak Park Connection: Subject of film Category: Documentary Award Finalist: Best Cinematography <i>Don't Turn Your Back On Friday Night</i> - 1:42:41 Director: Mike Schmiedeler, Michael O'Brien Synopsis: The decades-long journey of the Ike Reilly rock band. Oak Park Connection: Director Category: Documentary Award Finalist: Best Documentary Q & A
8:15 PM	Break

Program Block 4: Threats - Oak Park Occult	
8:30 PM	<i>Close Encounter</i> - 0:13:24 Director: Jeph Porter Synopsis: Teenage girl and her father take a road trip to a UFO convention. Oak Park Connection: Crew Category: Narrative Short Award Finalist: Best Narrative Short, Best Design Elements <i>Rerun</i> - 0:13:39 Director: Nick Marnos Synopsis: Two friends find a lost episode of their favorite TV sitcom on VHS, then must locate a VCR. Oak Park Connection: Location Category: Narrative Short <i>Cutting Ties</i> - 0:01:11 Director: Sarah Najera Synopsis: Story of a puppeteer and her marionette. Oak Park Connection: Location, director, performers Category: Narrative Short Award Finalist: Best Narrative Short, Best Design Elements <i>Run</i> - 0:04:37 Director: Daniel John Harris Synopsis: A jogger encounters a mysterious creature while on a run. Oak Park Connection: Director Category: Narrative Short Award Finalist: Best Narrative Short, Best Actress, Best Director, Best Cinematography <i>Bat</i> - 0:15:48 Director: Gitanjali Kapila Synopsis: A suburban shaman slays her dragon-mother with the help of a 10-year-old boy and a VR program. Oak Park Connection: Cast Category: Narrative Short Award Finalist: Best Supporting Actor / Actress (Joyce Porter)

	<i>Slice</i> - 0:04:09 Director: Nathan Mitzenmacher Synopsis: A man is trying to sleep when he hears a noise in the night. Oak Park Connection: Cast and crew Category: Narrative Short Award Finalist: Best Narrative Short, Best Director Q & A
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Sunday, September 14, 2025	
Madison Street Theater	
8:30 AM	On-site Registration, Festival Pass Pickup Breakfast
Program Block 5: Joy: Making Good	
9:15 AM	<i>The Dishwasher Quest</i> - 0:07:45 Director: Lizz Kannenberg Synopsis: Elementary school students take on the problem of a broken school dishwasher. Oak Park Connection: Filmmakers Category: Young Filmmaker (6-12) <i>Fleeting</i> - 0:02:15 Director: Bradford Chin Synopsis: A contemplation of youth that is too often enjoyed only in retrospect with the passage of time. Oak Park Connection: Director Category: Narrative Short <i>Altruism: What's In it For Me?</i> - 0:18:10 Director: Kathleen Ermitage Synopsis: The impact of early exposure to philanthropy. Oak Park Connection: Location Category: Documentary Award Finalist: Spirit of Oak Park <i>Middle of Nowhere</i> - 0:04:04 Director: Travis Shields Synopsis: Music video by the Dennis Fuentes Band Oak Park Connection: Musician

	Category: Music Videos Award Finalist: Best Music Video <i>"Da Tree Bears"</i> - 0:02:37 Director: John Roberts Synopsis: A youthful update to an old tale. Oak Park Connection: Filmmaker <i>How We Roll</i> - 0:15:54 Director: Anthony Ciancio Synopsis: What started as a little idea becomes a local phenomenon. Oak Park Connection: Director Category: Award Finalist: Best Documentary Q & A
10:45 PM	Break
Program Block 6: Real People: Don't Judge A Book...	
11:00 AM	<i>Mr. Sines</i> - 0:04:17 Director: Abel Berumen Synopsis: Tattoo culture in the United States Oak Park Connection: Director Category: Documentary <i>Shiners: Voices from Owsley County</i> - 1:26:00 Director: Seth McClellan Synopsis: High school students write and perform a play with original music about growing up in rural Appalachia. Oak Park Connection: Director Category: Documentary Award Finalist: Best Documentary <i>My Name is Gia</i> - 0:17:26 Director: Abel Berumen Synopsis: Surviving Breast Cancer Oak Park Connection: Director Category: Documentary Award Finalist: Best Director Q & A

1:15 PM	Industry Panel: What Is Their Role in a Film? David Leonard: Location Scout Gaby Labotka: Intimacy and Stunt Coordinator Oisin O'Driscoll: Colorist
1:45 PM	Lunch Break
Program Block 7: Relationships: Getting To Know You	
2:30 PM	<i>Push Pull Entangle</i> - 0:03:41 Director: Sarah Najera Synopsis: A couple has a disagreement. Oak Park Connection: Creators Category: Narrative Short <i>Park Life</i> - 1:20:00 Director: Tyler Haney Synopsis: A New York consultant and a Los Angeles writer randomly meet on a Chicago park bench. Oak Park Connection: Cast Category: Feature Award Finalist: Best Actor (Matt Dellapina), Best Actress (Kathleen McElfresh) <i>When Brian Met Jamila</i> - 0:04:12 Director: Valencia S. Bey Synopsis: Brian and Jamila meet by chance.... Oak Park Connection: Director Category: Narrative Short <i>A Matter of Time</i> - 0:01:31 Director: Daniel John Harris Synopsis: A man reflects on his relationship with his wife. Oak Park Connection: Filmmaker Category: Narrative Short <i>My Sister</i> - 0:09:08 Director: Dan Aho Synopsis: Sisters torn apart by addiction are reunited. Oak Park Connection: Director Category: Narrative Short

	<i>Housecats</i> - 0:06:25 Director: Zac Cooper Synopsis: A mother and daughter hide in their bathroom from uninvited guests. Oak Park Connection: Writer/Producer/Actress Category: Narrative Short Award Finalist: Best Actress (Cindy Clemens) Q & A
4:45 PM	Break
5:00 PM	★ ★ ★ Awards Ceremony ★ ★ ★
	FREE with a pass or ticket for any other program.
	Music by Ike and Shane Reilly.
6:00 PM	Festival ends.
6:30 PM	Post-Festival Meet-Up at The Nineteenth Century Club 178 Forest Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60301 All are welcome! Discuss films from the fest! Cash bar.

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HAMLET

2026



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Award Finalists
Specialty Awards
Best Design Elements (Costumes, Special Effects, Set Design)
<i>Close Encounter</i>
<i>Cutting Ties</i>
<i>The Pantone Guy</i>
Best Cinematography
<i>Path</i>
<i>Run</i>
<i>Styles Make Fights - "Mad" Max Metzgar</i>
Best Actor
<i>Holiday Hold-up</i> : John Pirruccello
<i>Park Life</i> : Matt Dellapina
<i>Vince: The Punctual Vagrant</i> : Mike Green
Best Actress
<i>Housecats</i> : Cindy Clemens
<i>Park Life</i> : Kathleen McElfresh
<i>Run</i> : Courtney Abbott
Best Supporting Performance
<i>Holiday Hold-Up</i> : Matty Ryan
<i>Bat</i> : Joyce Porter
Best Director
<i>My Name Is Gia</i> - Abel Berume
<i>The Pantone Guy</i> - Patrick Creadon
<i>Run</i> - Daniel John Harris
<i>Slice</i> - Nathan Mitzenmacher

"Best of" Awards
Best Music Video
<i>Middle of Nowhere</i>
<i>PATH</i>
Best Narrative Short
<i>Close Encounter</i>
<i>Cutting Ties</i>
<i>Run</i>
<i>Slice</i>
Best Documentary
<i>Don't Turn Your Back On Friday Night</i>
<i>How We Roll</i>
<i>The Pantone Guy</i>
Best Feature
<i>Holiday Hold-up</i>
<i>Park Life</i>

Festival Bios

Featured Actor of Opening Night Film



John Mahoney (1940-2018) was born in Blackpool, England, and began acting in his late thirties. He was a longtime member of Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre and performed in over thirty productions. He earned a 1986 Tony Award for his role in *The House of Blue Leaves*. John's stage work led to memorable performances in films such as *Moonstruck* (1987), *Say Anything...* (1989), and *Barton Fink* (1991). His role as Martin Crane on television's *Frasier* (1993-2004) brought him widespread fame. He showed his ability to blend humor with heartfelt emotion. Known for his humility and love of a quiet life, he lived in Oak Park for many years.

Opening Night Speaker

Deborah H. Holdstein is Professor of English, Emerita, at Columbia College Chicago, where she taught courses in literature, film, and other subjects. She came to Columbia as Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Holdstein has also taught at Northern Illinois University (where she was English Department chair) and Governors State University. She has published widely in areas that include cinema studies.

Festival Day Panelists

Jennifer Goodman, actress-turned-writer/producer and owner of Lakefront Pictures, co-starred in *Better Call Saul*, created *Conrad*, and wrote/produced *The Unseen* (Apple TV,

Amazon). With numerous awards and nominations, she continues building acclaimed projects and is now producing her upcoming Christmas feature in Chicago.

Jen Howard started with a love of 80's anime, studied animation, stunk at it, but found VFX model making. When computers became useful, she traded her X-ACTO knife for a mouse and has been compositing for features, TV and commercials for 25 years.

Gabby Labotka is an intimacy and stunt coordinator for film.

David Leonard is a local film and television location scout, actor, and writer who has worked in the business for over two decades on hundreds of independent and major productions in the Chicago area.

Oisín O'Driscoll, Head of Color, Advertising at Harbor Picture Company, is a renowned colorist in advertising and film, known for high-profile campaigns, technical innovation, and advocacy for LGBTQIA+ representation in media. He has over 15 years of experience in color, having worked on campaigns for Gucci, Jeep, Hugo Boss, Walmart and many more.

Tony Scott-Green sculpts original music for film, TV, and media. He has worked on feature films, TV shows, documentaries, web series and sonic branding for Fortune 500 companies. Originally from Scotland, he now composes and records at Greenhouse Sound Studios in Chicago and Los Angeles. He considers himself a storyteller first, filmmaker second, and composer third. He is a firm believer that "The right music helps an audience see better." He is known for often incorporating and manipulating vintage instruments and alternative textures into his scores.

Edwin Wilson teaches film production and acting at Elmhurst College and founded Sense of Urgency Theatre.

Come Back Next Year For More Fascinating Films With an Oak Park Connection

Submit Your Film for 2026

Are you a filmmaker or someone involved with a film with an Oak Park connection? Submissions for the 2026 festival will be accepted beginning next May through **Film Freeway**.

Support the festival by donating, becoming a board member or a volunteer. Email us at: team@opilff.org



OAK PARK, IL FILM FESTIVAL
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Films with an Oak Park Connection

Member of the Chicago Alliance of Film Festivals (CAFF)

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7-9 pm

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Fashion
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Artists have thrown many costume parties
in the past 100 years to raise funds for OPAL,
so this year, let's get dressed to express!

Visit oakparkartleague.org to purchase tickets or scan the QR code
directly to the event page. Various ticket packages available.
Please consider making a donation if you are unable attend. Thank you!





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OAK PARK - IL FILM FESTIVAL

FILMS WITH AN OAK PARK CONNECTION

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SEPTEMBER 11, 13-14, 2025



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**Here's to the next
generation of
Oak Park stars!**

