



THE AMERICAN ACADEMY
OF DRAMATIC ARTS

Academy President Susan Zech's Statement on the Passing of Alumnus Kirk Douglas

It is with great sadness that we have learned of the passing of Kirk Douglas, legendary actor and beloved member of The Academy's Class of 1941.

Throughout a career of enormous scope and breadth, Mr. Douglas demonstrated an unyielding commitment to the craft of acting. As a young thespian, he sought to refine his innate gifts through dedication to study and practice, launching a career that would forever mark him as a premier generational talent. In his storytelling, Kirk Douglas was the embodiment of Veritas – Truth – an authenticity in performance that enabled him to fully inhabit his characters and viscerally connect with his audiences.

More than an icon of stage and screen, Mr. Douglas was also renowned as a philanthropist, patron of the arts and fervent educational advocate. In so many ways, he worked tirelessly to elevate and uphold the dramatic arts as a vital cultural force. His decades-long support of The Academy's ongoing educational mission underscored his passion not only for the profession of acting itself, but also for those individuals who embrace acting as a calling to greatness. His influence will always be felt throughout our greater Academy family, and today's students are direct beneficiaries of the commitment and leadership that he so gracefully modeled throughout his lifetime.

Kirk Douglas was the epitome of excellence – in his craft, and also in his humanity. His legacy will extend far into the future, serving as admirable inspiration for all those who seek to follow the path he so uniquely blazed.

Susan Zech

President, The American Academy of Dramatic Arts