
The legacy of Katharine Hepburn transcends generations and industries from Hollywood to fashion America. For over six decades, Katharine Hepburn (1907-2003) dazzled silver screen, television, and theater audiences with memorable characters and portrayals. The numbers speak for themselves: 52 films; four Oscars from twelve nominations; over 25 theater productions with two Tony Award nominations and an Emmy.

With a stage and film career that spanned sixty-six years, Katharine “Kate” Hepburn is an American icon and even earned the nickname “The First Lady of Cinema”. Born and raised in Connecticut, Hepburn’s career reflected the changing role of women in the broader society. Challenging the norms of the day, she took control of her image and identity by establishing a unique sense of style which influenced countless women, fashion designers, and the informal, elegant approach to American style that continues to resonate today.

On April 11, 2014, the Connecticut Historical Society (CHS), in Hartford, brings Kate’s personal costume collection back to her home state with a special exhibit, Katharine Hepburn: Dressed for Stage and Screen. This is the first and only scheduled New England appearance for the limited-time exhibition, which features over 40 costumes, worn in 21 films and 6 stage productions. The collection includes an ensemble of her signature tailored beige trousers and linen jackets, vintage posters, playbills, photos, and other Hepburn-related artifacts as well as stage costumes from The Philadelphia Story and Coco and screen costumes from Adam’s Rib and Stage Door. The exhibit was organized by the Kent State University Museum, with local stories about Hepburn’s remarkable family, her life in Connecticut, and items from CHS’s collection included for its Connecticut appearance.

“What women wear today has been immeasurably influenced by Katharine Hepburn’s strength of personality and insistence on wearing what she wanted,” said exhibition curator Jean Druesedow who is the Director of the Kent State University Museum. “She took charge of her career, and her public image early in her career, and maintained a consistent style.”

Hepburn performed in Connecticut at The Bushnell in Hartford, the Ivoryton Playhouse, and the American Shakespeare Festival Theater in Stratford. In 1999 the American Film Institute named Hepburn the top female screen legend of the twentieth century. She was nominated 12 times and received four Academy Awards for Best Actress for her roles in Morning Glory (1931/2), Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner? (1967), The Lion in Winter (1968), and On Golden Pond (1981). In 1975, she received an Emmy for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Special Program for her performance in Love Among the Ruins. In recognition of her role in shaping women’s fashion, in 1986 Hepburn was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Council of Fashion Designers of America.

CHS is located at 1 Elizabeth Street in Hartford. For more, visit chs.org.

Katharine Hepburn returns to the spotlight in Connecticut
CT Historical Society celebrates iconic Hollywood star
About the Connecticut Historical Society (@ConnHistSoc):

Founded in 1825, the Connecticut Historical Society is a non-profit museum, library, research and education center. CHS strives to inspire and foster a life-long interest in history and ignite a passion for learning about history through research assistance, exhibitions, tours and programs for all ages. Visit chs.org or call 860-236-5621.

About the Kent State University Museum:

The Kent State University Museum, located in Kent, Ohio, opened in 1985 with the gift of a collection of fashion and decorative arts assembled by New York fashion entrepreneurs Jerry Silverman and Shannon Rodgers. The museum collection has grown from the initial 5000 pieces to almost 40,000 objects representing high fashion from the 18th century to the present day, and includes examples of traditional dress from around the world. Performance clothes have been a part of the collection since its inception as Shannon Rodgers worked in Hollywood prior to his career in fashion. The Estate of Katharine Hepburn generously gave Miss Hepburn’s personal collection of her performance clothes to the museum in 2010. An administrative unit of Kent State University, the museum receives additional support through a sustainability grant from the Ohio Arts Council and private donors.