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NEWS STATEMENT

In Memoriam: Roger Ebert (1942-2013)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE---LOS ANGELES, CA, April 4, 2013 – The American Film Institute records with sorrow the passing of Roger Ebert, film critic of the Chicago Sun-Times, who received an honorary degree from the AFI Conservatory in 2004.

“Roger Ebert championed the art of the moving image,” said AFI President and CEO Bob Gazzale, “and by the courage of his personal example demonstrated how much movies matter.”

Ebert chaired the AFI AWARDS jury of critics, filmmakers and scholars who selected the year’s 10 best films in 2004. “He held the gavel that day with the same enthusiasm for excellence that made his voice a force in American popular culture,” said Gazzale.

Ebert wrote *BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS* (1970) for director Russ Meyer and then made his mark as a national critic on television with *SNEAK PREVIEWS* and *AT THE MOVIES*, often sharing the screen with Gene Siskel or other film critics and offering a thumbs-up or down assessment of both major studio releases and smaller independent films. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for criticism in 1975. In recent years, he inspired the film community by continuing to review films on his blog in spite of his courageous fight against cancer.

“On behalf of all of us who love the movies – thumbs up, Roger – for a life well lived and our heartfelt thanks for all the gifts you will continue to give us as time goes by,” said Gazzale.

About the American Film Institute

AFI is America’s promise to preserve the history of the motion picture, to honor the artists and their work and to educate the next generation of storytellers. AFI provides leadership in film, television and digital media and is dedicated to initiatives that engage the past, the present and the future of the moving image arts. AFI programs include the **AFI Catalog of Feature Films** and **AFI Archive**, which preserve film heritage for future generations; the **AFI Life Achievement Award** – the highest honor for a career in film – now in its 41st year; **AFI Awards**, honoring the most outstanding motion pictures and television programs of the year; **AFI’s 100 Years...100 Movies** television events and movie reference lists, which have introduced and reintroduced classic American movies to millions of film lovers; year-round and special event exhibition through **AFI Fest presented by Audi**, **AFI Docs presented by Audi** and **the AFI Silver Theatre**; and educating the next generation of storytellers at the world renowned **AFI Conservatory**, renowned for the quality of its instructors and speakers, and its notable alumni. For more information about AFI, visit AFI.com or connect with AFI at twitter.com/AmericanFilm, facebook.com/AmericanFilmInstitute and youtube.com/AFI.

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