

What You Probably Never Realized About Award Show Trophies

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Culture



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In honor of Hollywood's most wonderful time of year, here's a closer look at the coveted golden guys, gals, globes, and gramophones (as well as other industries' top trophies) that contenders are clearing shelf space for.

The Academy Award



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Height: 13.5 inches

Weight: 8.5 pounds

Likely the most recognized trophy in the world, Hollywood's highest honor was first handed out in 1929, two years after the formation of the group that puts on the competition, the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. MGM art director Cedric Gibbons envisioned a golden knight standing on a film reel and gripping a crusader's sword and sculptor George Stanley realized the concept in three dimensions. The reel has five spokes, one for each of the five original Academy branches (actors, directors, producers, technicians, and writers). The origin of his widely-used nickname is unknown although one popular explanation is that the Academy librarian (and later executive director) Margaret Herrick exclaimed upon first seeing the heavy metal hunk that he reminded her of her uncle Oscar. It takes Polich Tallix Fine Art Foundry in Walden, New York, three months to make 50 solid bronze statuettes and plate them in 24-karat gold and 3,140 of them have been given out over the course of 90 years. Not even World War II stopped Hollywood's biggest night from happening, although recipients received painted plaster tokens for three years thanks to the metal shortage. Once the fighting finished, the Academy allowed the placeholder prizes to be exchanged for the real thing. Find out all the insider secrets Hollywood insiders won't tell you about the Oscars.

The Emmy



Alex Berliner/BEI/Shutterstock

Height: 15 inches

Weight: 6 pounds 12 ounces

The 48th time was the charm in the case of TV's top trophy. After tossing aside 47 proposals in 1949, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences selected an idea featuring a winged woman holding an atom submitted by television engineer Louis McManus. His wife was the model. The wings represent the muse of art and the atom symbolizes the scientific side of the industry. Immy,

an abbreviation commonly used back in the day for the early image orthicon camera, was almost called Ike, the moniker for the iconoscope tube, except members didn't want it to be mistakenly associated with war hero Dwight D. Eisenhower. According to the Television Academy's website, the spelling was changed to an "e" to represent the feminine form. Chicago's R.S. Owens company combines copper, nickel, silver, and gold to make nearly 400 trophies each year. Each Emmy takes five and a half hours to make and is handled with white gloves to prevent fingerprints, according to [CNN](#).

The Grammy



Kathy Hutchins/Shutterstock

Height: 9.5 inches

Weight: 5 pounds

Music's biggest night was originally called the [Gramophone Awards](#) when the first ceremony was held in 1959, which explains why the shelves of artists like Beyonce, Adele, Kanye West, Paul McCartney, Taylor Swift, and Ricky Martin are lined with gilded gramophones. The original Grammy featuring a soldered hand-crank and a walnut base was created in 1958 by the [Recording Academy's](#) original craftsman, Bob Graves. In 1963, Graves integrated the crank and made it static after too many overenthusiastic recipients accidentally broke it off. Graves' long-time apprentice John Billings took over in 1986 when he passed away and modified the statue once again in 1991. He excised the crank, changed the base to a black custom alloy, and made it 30

percent larger. They are also now made with a trademarked alloy called Grammium and are plated in 24-karat gold. Billings and his Ridgway, Colorado-based crew make Grammys all year long as between 300 and 350 are awarded annually and each one takes 15 hours to produce. Look back on these [17 Emmy, Oscar, and other awards show scandals](#) you probably forgot about.

The Tony



lev radin/Shutterstock

Height: 5 inches

Weight: 3.5 pounds

Broadway's best and brightest gather every June to put their jazz hands together for the plays and players that dominated the world's stages that season. Given out by the American Theatre Wing and the Broadway League, the Antoinette Perry Award for Excellence in Broadway Theatre AKA the "T" in EGOT were named and nicknamed after the co-founder of ATW. When they were first awarded in 1947, winners were given scrolls. According to the New York Times, men also received a money clip and women got a compact. Two years later, the prize designed by Herman Rosse became a medallion in a presentation case. In 1967, when the ceremony was first televised, the medallion, which featured comedy and tragedy masks on one side and a profile of Perry on the other, was connected to a curved armature and mounted to a black pedestal. In 2010, the trophy grew almost two inches taller and two pounds heavier because its small stature was awkward for winners to grip. The namesake's picture was also removed to make way for winner details to be etched on that side instead.

The Golden Globe



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Height: 11.5 inches

Weight: 7.8 pounds

The entertainment industry blings in each new year at the Beverly Hilton Hotel with this January awards show honoring the top TV series, movies, and the people who make them. The awards started in 1944 and are given out by the 90-person-strong Hollywood Foreign Press Association, according to *People*. As of the 2019 telecast, this program rewards winners with the most on-the-nose trophy as it is gold and topped by a globe surrounded in a strip of film. The new 2019 version replaced the marble base that was introduced in 2009—along with a more durable and accurate Earth—with a cylindrical metal one. It is also 2.3 pounds heavier and .75 inches taller than the previous prize according to the *Hollywood Reporter*. The youngest person to nab a globe was nine-year-old Ricky Schroder in 1980 for *The Champ*, while the oldest victor was 87-year-old composer Ennio Morricone, whose *Hateful Eight* music nabbed Best Original Score in 2016. Find out the [13 reality TV show secrets producers won't tell you](#).

The Actor



Rob Latour/Shutterstock

Height: 16 inches

Weight: 12 pounds

For its annual acting awards show, which turned 25 in 2019, the Screen Actors Guild appropriately bestows the beautiful people with an incredibly tall, fit statuette who holds the comedy and tragedy masks of yore in his outstretched arms. Like Oscar, he's also not wearing any clothes. According to SAG, The Actor's career began when he was sculpted by Edward Saenz and designed by Jim Heimann and Jim Barnett. It takes a team of ten skilled crafters at the American Fine Arts Foundry in Burbank, California, three to four months to produce the lot using the lost-wax method. The arms are attached separately. A wax version weighs ten times less than the bronze one and that's before the base is added. Each final product is stamped with a unique serial number. Because they don't know exactly which TV programs or films will take home the cast awards, they have extras made every year and any surplus nudes are stored in a secret SAG vault until the next year. These are the 11 surprising things no one tells you about the Academy Awards.

Film Independent Spirit Award



Kathy Hutchins/Shutterstock

Height: 12 inches

Weight: 6 pounds

Since 1986, the Spirit Awards have celebrated the best of independent cinema with an avian award designed by artist Carol Bosselman. An abstract bronze bird is perched atop a pedestal wrapped with a single shoelace, which according to Film Independent, the organization that puts on the party often billed as the anti-Oscars, symbolizes the shoestring budgets most of the contenders were shot on. The trophies have also been made by hand by American Fine Arts Foundry for more than 15 years using the lost wax casting method. Giving it a patina through a combination of heat and chemicals is the last step in the process.

The ESPY



Michael Buckner/Variety/Shutterstock

Height: 17 inches

Weight: 6.17 pounds

First handed out in 1993, the ESPYS recognize stellar individual and team athletic achievements as well as coaching prowess across the wide world of

sports. There are competing stories about why it is named ESPY. One says it is simply named after ESPN, the network that originally doled out the awards. (It now airs on ABC.) A second claims it is short for Excellence in Sports Performance Yearly. Either way, the trophy, a long silvery base topped with a basketball-like sphere, was the brainchild of late sculptor Lawrence Nowlan, who also designed the prize for the short-lived My VH1 Music Awards (held in 2000 and 2001). The artist's other work includes the Wildland Firefighters National Monument in Boise, Idaho, and the statue of Jackie Gleason as his *Honeymooners* character Ralph Kramden inside the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Manhattan. Golfer Tiger Woods still holds the record for most individual ESPY wins with 21, a title he stole from Michael Jordan with his 11th win back in 2001. See if you can guess 11 strange things that have been banned in sports.

Heisman Trophy



Debby Wong/Shutterstock

Height: 13.5 inches

Weight: 25 pounds

The Heisman Trophy has been bestowed on college football's best player, as chosen by New York's Downtown Athletic Club, since 1935, the year it was given to University of Chicago running back Jay Berwanger who jokingly used it as a doorstop before his death. Since 2005, the heavy hardware has been sculpted by MTM Recognition in Oklahoma, according to Mental Floss.

Coincidentally, the Oklahoma Sooners have produced seven Heisman winners, a record jointly held with Notre Dame and Ohio State, according to [Sports Illustrated](#). Its namesake John Heisman was a player for Brown and Penn before coaching at a variety of schools including Auburn, Clemson, Rice, and Georgia Tech. He is credited with inventing the center snap and the hidden ball trick. He was the N.Y.D.A.C. athletic director when the inaugural award was handed out but died before year two. The club voted to rechristen the award. However, the iconic pose? Not his. As a lineman, he rarely had the ball in his hands. It was based on the moves of Ed Smith, a former NYU running back who modeled for the sculptor Frank Eliscu in 1934. He had no idea his pal had put him on that primo pedestal until a documentary filmmaker contacted him for an interview in 1982. Most organizations will not release how much it costs to make their bling and the worth often depends on who earned it. Many winners have sold Heismans, including O.J. Simpson who fetched \$230,000. His total was topped by the \$395,240 sale of Minnesota's Bruce Smith's 1991 gridiron guy.

Pulitzer Prize Gold Medal



via pulitzer.org

Height: A quarter inch when laid flat

Weight: unavailable

Of the 21 [Pulitzer](#) categories, only one comes with a physical metallic keepsake and can't be won by an individual. Winning in any of the 20 others comes with

\$15,000 cash and a certificate. But the American newspaper that takes the top spot in the Public Service bracket collects a 24-karat gold-plated silver medallion presented in a cherry wood box. It was designed by sculptor Daniel Chester French, who went on to carve Abraham Lincoln for the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., and his partner Henry Augustus Lukeman in 1918, a year after the competition was launched. It features a bust of Benjamin Franklin, who himself was a successful editor and publisher of periodicals in the 1700s, you know, when he wasn't inventing stoves and bifocals or flying a kite. A brawny bare-chested printer at a press is on the flip side. Surrounding the worker are the words: "For disinterested and meritorious public service rendered by an American newspaper during the year...." The year of the award is inscribed on that side while the winning institution's name is etched under Franklin. Here are 16 secrets about another famous medal, the one Olympians vie for.

Dancing With The Stars Mirrorball Trophy



Mediapunch/Shutterstock

Height: 18 inches

Weight: 15 pounds

ABC's celebrity dance competition turned 25 in 2017. It was a milestone *DWTS* production designer James Yarnell never expected to reach. In fact, he told People everyone involved figured it wouldn't "last more than one season." That incorrect suspicion led to a limited budget for the winner's takeaway and that forced Yarnell to get creative when reinventing the award for the British reality show remake. "[Theirs] was basically a mirrorball on a stick." He bought a 3-ft.-tall brass lamp from Lamps Plus, took it apart, and reassembled it into a more traditional trophy shape. He added a wooden base and slapped a disco ball on top. Before the first finale, "probably about ten minutes before we went live," a network suit thought it was too short so they added a roll of parcel tape covered in gold paper between the stem and the base to add two inches. For season four, the store stopped carrying the lamp and production was forced to start having it professionally cast by Society Awards in New York. It now has an acrylic base and a brass stem. The show title lettering that wraps around the shiny sphere is made by California Cinnabar Inc. and the font is updated whenever the show logo is tweaked. Sometimes the whole thing is upgraded to celebrate milestones. For the all-stars season in 2012, the \$10 mirrorball was covered in Swarovski crystals. Season 20's triumphant pair went home with a gold-plated version. Season 25's winners' souvenir, an all silver beauty, weighed the most at more than 22 pounds. Don't miss the 12 best dance movies of all time.

Stanley Cup



klarka0608/Shutterstock

Height: 35.25 inches

Weight: 34.5 pounds

Surprisingly, the trophy is older than the National Hockey League, as the decorative bowl was first donated by Lord Stanley of Preston, the 1892 Governor General of Canada who became obsessed with hockey at Montreal's 1889 Winter Carnival, to be given to Canada's top amateur club in 1893. That original cup was retired to a display case at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto in 1963 as it became "too brittle," according to [Mental Floss](#), and the "Presentation Cup" took its place. The championship team's roster is etched by the NHL's official engraver onto a band on the same trophy each year instead of a new cup being minted, an abnormal practice in pro sports and awards in general. Only two teams are found within the bowl's inner wall. Since 1958, there are five bands of champions. When one fills up, they remove the oldest ring and move it to the vault with the original cup. Then, a new blank one is added. Two rings don't have names because the Cup was not awarded in 1919 due to a Spanish Flu outbreak, or from 2004 to 2005 because of the lockout. It is always accompanied by the [Keeper Of The Cup](#), a Hockey Hall Of Fame representative who travels with it during the 100 allotted off-season days each championship team gets with the trophy to do as they please. It has been tossed in a few pools, spent a night in an Ottawa canal, been left on the side of the road, used to sip champagne from, been used to burn rink mortgage documents, been used for baptisms, and visited a few strip clubs. Next, read on for these [100 interesting facts about practically anything](#).