

Why Ford's got 'it'

By ROBERT OSBORNE

During the eras that bridged Henry Ford and Harrison Ford came my favorite Ford of all, the movies' long-distance runner, Glenn Ford. Voted the No. 1 male box office attraction of 1958, Ford has added class, stature and that indefinable "it" factor to so many memorable movies — "Gilda," "The Big Heat," "The Blackboard Jungle," "3:10 to Yuma," "The Courtship of Eddie's Father" and "Superman" among them.

But even the less famous films of his — "Cowboy," "Interrupted Melody," "Trial," "The Mating of Millie," "Dear Heart," "A Stolen Life" and some 97 others — each owe a huge debt of gratitude to this man for the talent, energy and seamless acting he contributed to every film in which he appeared.

It's virtually impossible for someone to be in the public eye for more than a few years and not wear out his or her welcome, but Glenn Ford of Quebec, Canada; Hollywood, California; and the U.S. Marine Corps has been one of Hollywood's most consistently welcomed and respected treasures now for nearly 70 years.

He first made people sit up and take notice in a 1940 movie called "Heaven With a Barbed Wire Fence." That bargain-basement Fox film has long since been forgotten, but Glenn Ford has never been. Nor has he been less than a major star in the eyes of people who know and love movies.

He deserves our admiration not only for the work he's done and for his endurance but also for always having traveled the high road during that remarkable seven-decade career.

Happy 90th, Glenn. We salute you and all the keepers of your flame.

On Monday, Turner Classic Movies will air four key Glenn Ford features — "The Blackboard Jungle," "Fastest Gun Alive," "Ransom" and "Cowboy" — in honor of the actor's 90th birthday. Regular TCM emcee Osborne hosts the event.

Gilda



Glenn Ford 90th Birthday Tribute

WHEN: Monday

WHERE: Grauman's Egyptian Theater

ATTENDEES: Glenn Ford, Debbie Reynolds, Martin Landau, Angie Dickinson, Ernest Borgnine, Paul Mazursky, Shirley Jones, Earl Holliman, Michelle Phillips, Stella Stevens, Ann Rutherford, Dean Jones, Carol Lynley

PROGRAM: Birthday tribute with Glenn Ford followed by screening of "Gilda" and "Night in Manhattan" (the 1937 short subject featuring Ford's first screen appearance), discussion with Peter Ford and reception

PRESENTED BY: American Cinematheque in association with the Heartland Film Festival, TCM, Sony, Chopin, Moet, Variety

TICKET INFO: www.glennfordsalute.com

TOUGH

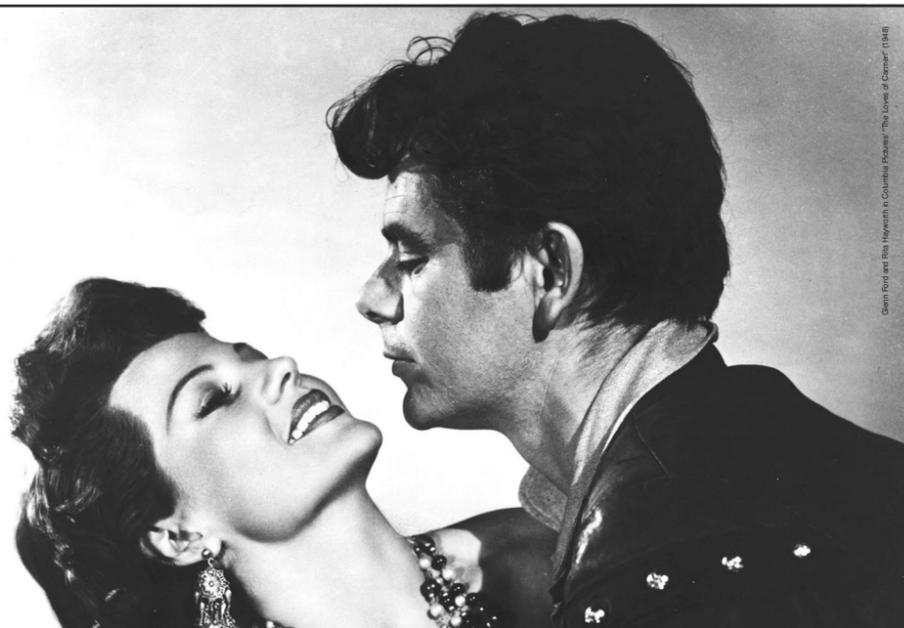
Continued from page A3

since Minnelli and Ford (in a typically unheralded classic Hollywood performance) don't play the plot; they play the psychology.

In the movie, father and son seem curiously unmoved by the absence of their wife/mother. That is, until Howard discovers one of his goldfish is dead and gives out a chilling scream. Jones tries to tell Ford that Howard isn't really upset about the fish, but is expressing repressed grief over his mother.

Suddenly, the heretofore gentle Ford rounds on her in a rage, shouting, "A fish is a fish!" On paper it doesn't look like much of a line — and it isn't. What matters isn't what's said but who's saying it. That's a man who just a few seconds ago seemed gentle and kind and hopeful, but who is now furious and cynical and bitter. Then, the storm passes and he's back to "normal," a word that Glenn Ford always manages to turn into a world of ironies, possibilities and disquieting contradictions.

(Henry Sheehan is president of the Los Angeles Film Critics Assn.)



AS VARIETY
CELEBRATES ITS
100TH BIRTHDAY,
THEY SALUTE
ANOTHER
HOLLYWOOD
LEGEND ON HIS
90TH BIRTHDAY.

GLENN FORD

For tickets to the Glenn Ford birthday celebration screening of "Gilda" at the American Cinematheque on Monday, May 1ST go to www.glennfordsalute.com



DAILY VARIETY
LOS ANGELES & GOTHAM EDITIONS
www.variety.com