

Titanic ties record by winning 11 Oscars in 4-hour ceremony

LOS ANGELES (AP) — *Titanic* won a record-tying 11 Oscars on Monday night, including best picture, director and song, as well as Jack Nicholson and Helen Hunt took acting honors as the misanthropic engineer and the waitress who softens his heart in *As Good As It Gets*.

"In the king of the world!" crowed *Titanic* director James Cameron, quoting a line from the movie's hero, as he accepted the prize at the 70th annual Academy Awards.

The \$200 million disaster epic and all-box-office champion tied the number of yards won by *Ben-Hur* in 1959, but lost out to win a record 12 Oscars when it lost in three categories: Hunt beat Winslet, Kim Basinger took supporting actress for *L.A. Confidential* over Glauert, and *Men in Black* claimed the top prize.

Cameron thanked his cast and crew, saying, "You guys gave me pure gold every day and I share this gold with you ... anybody else that I was going to thank for got an Oscar or a nomination, so I'm covered."

A dramatic counterpoint to the evening's festivities, Cameron reminded the audience that the movie was based on real tragedy and asked for a moment of silence. Then he returned to a celebratory mood.

"You really made this a night to remember in every way. Now let's party till

down," he said.

The film so dominated the evening that no other film won more than two awards. Three managed that many: *As Good As It Gets*, *Good Will Hunting* and *L.A. Confidential*.

Nicholson joins an elite group of only four performers to own three or more Oscars. His others are as best actor for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* in 1975 and supporting actor in *Terms of Endearment* in 1983. Katharine Hepburn won four Academy Awards, and Ingrid Bergman and Walter Brennan each won three.

"I'm honored to be on any list with you, Bobby, Dusty, and you and your father Mr. Damon, and my old bike pal, Fonda," Nicholson said, making the umpteenth joke of the night about fellow nominee Matt Damon's age and alluding to his long-ago co-starring role in *Easy Rider*.

Nicholson joked about suffering from doubts, given the virtual sweep by *Titanic*: "I had a sinking feeling all night, right up to here."

Hunt, the only American competing against four British actresses in her category, thanked her director, who was not even nominated.

"I'm here for one reason and that's Jim Brooks, one single reason, and that's the only reason really," Hunt said.

Robin Williams won the supporting actor award as the bereaved psychology professor who counsels a troubled young ge-

nius in *Good Will Hunting*.

"Ah, man, this might be the one time I'm speechless," said Williams, known for his stream-of-consciousness humor.

He then managed to thank many, many people, including his young co-stars Damon and Ben Affleck, quipping: "I still want to see some ID."

Affleck and Damon won the best original screenplay Oscar, and Brian Helgeland and Curtis Hanson won the adapted screenplay award for *L.A. Confidential*.

Basinger, the Veronica Lake look-alike/call girl in *L.A. Confidential*, beat out *Titanic*'s Stuart, who was a sentimental favorite after coming out of retirement at age 87 to play a centenarian survivor of the shipwreck.

"If anyone has a dream out there, I'm living proof that it can come true," Basinger told the Shrine Auditorium audience.

Titanic went into the night with a record-tying 14 nominations. Besides winning for best picture, direction and song — "My Heart Will Go On" — the film won for cinematography, art direction, film editing, costume design, sound, sound editing, original dramatic score and visual effects.

Titanic's 14 nominations tied the record set by 1950's *All About Eve*.

The three-hour, 14-minute romance set on the doomed luxury liner has already smashed box office records, overtaking *Jurassic Park* as the biggest moneymaker

in movie history (adjusted for inflation), with more than \$1.1 billion. It has also been No. 1 at the U.S. box office for an unprecedented 14 weekends in a row.

The Full Monty, a comedy about laid-off British factory workers who form a male stripper act, won the Oscar for original musical or comedy score.

Billy Crystal had the duty of keeping the show on course, kicking things off with a filmed sketch that put him in scenes of the best-picture nominees, much as he did last year.

It started with spit in the face from *Titanic*'s Leonardo DiCaprio. "What, give up show business?" Crystal deadpanned.

This year's Oscar pageant was a celebration of comebacks, with a batch of nominees who had been largely forgotten, including Peter Fonda, Julie Christie, Robert Forster as well as Burt Reynolds and Stuart.

The nostalgia theme extended to the ceremony's invitation list. The Academy invited every living winner of the acting awards and introduced each one on the stage. Those introductions pushed the show to three hours and 45 minutes, about a half-hour more than scheduled.

The worldwide TV audience was projected at 1 billion. Ratings were expected to be up over last year's disappointing numbers, largely because of the monster draw of *Titanic*, which has made nearly \$500 million in North America.

Academy Award winners



- Best picture**
Titanic
- Best actor**
Jack Nicholson, *As Good as it Gets*
- Best actress**
Helen Hunt, *As Good as it Gets*
- Best supporting actor**
Robin Williams, *Good Will Hunting*
- Best supporting actress**
Kim Basinger, *L.A. Confidential*
- Best director**
James Cameron, *Titanic*

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