

Top film editors award to 'JFK'

BY AMY DAWES

Editors of Warner Bros.' "JFK" scored best feature film editing honors Saturday night at the 42nd annual Eddie Awards of the American Cinema Editors, increasing the chances of that pic making good on at least one of its eight Academy Award nominations.

John Hutshing and Pietro Scalia, who led the team that pieced together the dazzling combination of authentic docu footage and fresh visuals for Oliver Stone's controversial 189-minute "JFK," beat out competitors Craig McKay for "The Silence of the Lambs" and Mark Goldblatt, Conrad Buff and Richard Harris for "Terminator 2: Judgment Day."

Other Eddie winners were Michael Greer and Jay Miracle, best editing of a documentary, for "Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse"; John Wright, best editing of a television special, for "Sarah, Plain and Tall"; Paul Dixon and James Galloway, best editing of an episode from a miniseries, for "Switched at Birth, Part I"; Roger Bondelli, Jerry Frizell and Ron Volk, best editing of an episode from a television series, for the "War of the Worlds" episode of "Brooklyn Bridge"; and Lance Anderson of Boston U., winner of the student editing award.

Hutshing, at the winner's podium for "JFK" with Scalia, voiced his appreciation for the chance to work on a project he believed in, and thanked Stone, "who not only had the courage to bring the story to the screen, but was courageous enough to let us edit it." Hutshing won the editor's Oscar, along with David Brenner, for Stone's "Born on the Fourth of July."

Notably, electronic editing was used by the team of "JFK" editors for much of the pic's preliminary work; a video-based system was used to facilitate matching of the varied kinds of old and new, docu and feature formats, while the final cuts were done on film.

The switch to electronics was stressed by the evening's top honoree, Francis Coppola, when he arrived at the podium to accept a Golden Eddie Award for career achievement.

"My last two films were edited totally electronically," he said. "Dracula we didn't even print."

Describing himself as a former "boy scientist" who has "always believed in having one foot in the past and one foot in the future," Coppola acknowledged resistance to the controversial new video-based editing technologies, but opined that a changeover is inevitable and beneficial.

"I believe we're in for an incredible decade. The cinema editor will take a position in the future that

some of you may not even have thought of."

The cinema editor "will assume a pivotal position in the coming revolution," he declared, although the present technology "is still three to five years away from what it will become."

"(Electronics) will help you become what you truly are—the editor of the moments."

Putting the changes in perspective as he lamented fondly the switch from hand-cutting to Movieolas to flatbeds, Coppola advised that "it would be a good idea for every working editor to become a friend of computers. They are an essential part of the vocabulary of the modern editor."

Along with the career award, Coppola was made an honorary member of American Cinema Editors, an honor he shares with directors David Lean and Richard Brooks, among others. He had been introduced affectionately by director Billy Wilder, who opined that Coppola's "The Godfather"

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was, "may the heavens strike me dead, a better movie than 'Citizen Kane.'"

An interesting angle on the evening was that Coppola and his work also served as the focal point of the documentary that won editing honors—"Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse," an account of his epic struggle to finish "Apocalypse Now."

At the podium with co-winner Jay Miracle, editor Michael Greer thanked Coppola "for supplying us with some wonderful moments to work with" and Coppola's wife, Eleanor, who was also present at the awards dinner, "for getting it all on film."

Other highlights of the evening, a black-tie dinner that attracted about 550 to the Beverly Hilton, were presentation of career achievement awards to Harold F. Kress and Charles Nelson.

Director John Frankenheimer made the presentation to Kress, who won an Eddie for "How the

West Was Won," as well as two Oscars and four Oscar nominations.

Jack Lemmon made the lifetime award to Nelson, with whom he has collaborated on 10 pictures. Nelson, an Oscar-winner for "Picnic" and editor of 84 films between 1939 and 1969, advised young editors that "you must learn timing, no matter what you do."

ACE president George Grenville recapped the org's successful struggle of the past year to preserve rights to the ACE acronym in a battle with a cable org, and heralded the coming of an ACE Educational Center that will exist as a non-profit research and training facility housing a library and museum and hosting seminars and workshops.

Other presenters for the evening, emceed by Howie Mandel, were Diane Ladd, Roger Moore, Karen Arthur, Lisa Eilbacher, Cecil Hoffmann & John Spencer and Jon Wilkman.