

## **Diana Carey receives first prize by California Press Women, Inc. for her book, "Baby Peggy"**

**March 23, 1976**

Diana Serra Cary, trade book buyer for the University of California, San Diego bookstore -- better known during Hollywood's silent era as "Baby Peggy" -- was awarded first prize March 27 by California Press Women, Inc., for her book "The Hollywood Posse," a tribute to the forgotten men of films, the stunt rider extras.

Cary's father, Jack Montgomery, was already working as a stuntman and stand-in for stars when his daughter, then less than two years old, was "discovered" by director Fred Fishback, who teamed her up with Brownie, The Wonder Dog for a series of two-reel comedies.

Six months after Baby Peggy began her career, however, Brownie died and Peggy embarked on a brief but dazzling career as a series of miniature vamps, tragic heroines, dastardly villains of both sexes, and an myriad of other roles in two-reelers which usually followed and cleverly satirized the melodramatic masterpieces of the early film years.

Peggy, who changed her name to Diana in her teens, began at a very early age to record her impressions of the times spent with her father and his companions. Most of them were former cowboys of the real old west who had retired from the trail and the range to risk life and limb and the safety of their mounts in daredevil scenes for often-exploitative and usually uninformed directors. The cowboys tried to educate their bosses on the set but, Diana recalls, most directors weren't interested in either authenticity or safety.

"The Hollywood Posse," she says, is a tribute to her father and "the men he loved and the horses he loved."

Carey's book was one of at least 260 manuscripts, articles, and other writings submitted for statewide consideration by the professional women writers' organization which is an affiliate of the National Federation of Press Women. Cary is a member of the southern district division of the California group.

Her state award makes her eligible to compete nationally for first-prize honors which will be announced in June at a banquet in New Jersey.

Carey was recently notified that Houghton-Mifflin Co., publishers of her first book, will also publish a study of the effects of child stardom tentatively titled "The Children of the Dream Factory."

"I'm studying not just the child but the family," says Cary, who hopes to finish the new book by May 1977, so that it will be in bookstores by the fall of that year.

The book, which traces child stars and their families from the early days of films through the present, is the only one of its kind ever attempted, Cary believes, on the cult of the child star and its history in American culture.

"In addition," she says, "it is the only one in which the person writing the story grew up as one of the subjects and grew up with the other characters."

Last fall, Cary was honored by the Rosemary Award Assn., "A Society of Remembrance to Present Belated Awards to our Beloved Silent Stars," instituted to honor film stars who shone before the Academy Awards.

Cary's was the first Rosemary awarded to a former child star by the society of film buffs. Among previous winners was silent vamp Pola Negri.

To promote "The Hollywood Posse," which she calls a "slow beginner," Cary will be appearing on "To Tell the Truth" and several local New York City television programs during the coming weeks.

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