

Beat: Entertainment

UPDATE2 -- Legendary film director Mike Nichols dead at age 83

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USPA News - Legendary film director Mike Nichols, who won an Academy Award for the 1967 seminal comedy "The Graduate" and who is regarded as one of America's best directors of the 20th century, has died unexpectedly, his wife's employer said on Thursday. He was 83. Nichols, who was married to ABC World News anchor Diane Sawyer, died of cardiac arrest late on Wednesday.

"I am writing with the very sad news that Diane's husband, the incomparable Mike Nichols, passed away suddenly on Wednesday evening," ABC News president James Goldston said in a note to staff. Goldston added: "In a triumphant career that spanned over six decades, Mike created some of the most iconic works of American film, television and theater. He was a true visionary, winning the highest honors in the arts for his work as a director, writer, producer and comic and was one of a tiny few to win the EGOT - an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar and a Tony." Nichols' family plans to hold a small, private service later this week, with a memorial service to be held at a later date, Goldston said. The famed film director was born in Berlin in 1931 but fled Nazi Germany at the age of eight. He spent his adolescence in New York before attending the University of Chicago, where he met Elaine May with whom he created the improvisational comedy duo "Nichols and May." The popular act led them to Broadway and an eventual Grammy Award. After directing four other shows on Broadway, all of which won Tony Awards, Nichols moved to the big screen in 1966, when Elizabeth Taylor chose him to direct the black comedy-drama film "Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?" The movie was an overwhelming success, becoming one of only two films to have ever been nominated in every eligible category at the Academy Awards. Nichols' second film, "The Graduate" in 1967, was an even bigger success, becoming one of the highest-grossing films in the history of the American film industry. The movie, about a recent college graduate who finds himself trapped in an affair with the wife of his father's business partner before falling in love with the woman's daughter, earned Nichols an Oscar for Best Director. After directing a number of other films, including "Catch-22" (1970), "Carnal Knowledge" (1971), "The Day of the Dolphins" (1973, and the period comedy "The Fortune" (1975), Nichols returned to Broadway in 1977. He was awarded the American Film Institute's Life Achievement Award in 2010. Nichols is survived by his wife Diane, three children and four grandchildren.

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