



Australian film organization creates Ledger scholarship

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LOS ANGELES (AP) — Heath Ledger was known for giving aspiring Australian actors a hand in Hollywood. Now, an Australian film organization has established a scholarship fund in the late actor's name to continue those efforts.

"There's an entire tribe of Australians who have all benefited from his generosity," said Susie Dobson, president of Australians in Film, or AiF. "This (scholarship) captures Heath's spirit and serves our mission to help and celebrate Australian filmmakers."

Ledger — who died at 28 of an accidental prescription drug overdose in January — had served as an ambassador for the film organization and its board wanted to honor him after his death, Dobson said.

Director Gregor Jordan announced the establishment of the Heath Ledger Scholarship Fund last week at AiF's annual Breakthrough Awards, where he read a statement from Ledger's father, Kim Ledger.

"Although reluctant to lend his name to anything commercial, we know Heath would be proud of his attachment to this scholarship," Kim Ledger's statement said. "This scholarship in part does what Heath has done personally during the last 10 years and supported financially or in kind many friends, Australian actors, singers, directors or writers seeking to ply their talents in the USA."

Jordan also said that Michelle Williams, mother of Ledger's daughter, "would be very proud and happy to be the first benefactor" of the scholarship fund.

The first recipient will be announced next year, Dobson said.

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