November 25, 2015

Recognizing his profound impact as a filmmaker and important work as founder of the USC Shoah Foundation, Trustee Steven Spielberg was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom on November 24.

“Steven’s films are marked most importantly by a faith in our common humanity, the same faith in humanity that led him to create the Shoah Foundation, and lend a voice to the survivors of genocide around the world,” President Barack Obama said in presenting the award at the White House.

“His stories have shaped America’s story and his values have shaped our world.”

Spielberg was among 17 individuals awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor.

Among its efforts, USC Shoah Foundation records and shares interviews with survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust and other genocides.

— David Medzerian

December 6, 2015

At an inspiring December event in Washington, D.C., the Kennedy Center honored USC alumnus George Lucas, alongside a number of our nation’s most celebrated artists, thinkers, and leaders.

In a video clip that played at the event, Mr. Lucas said that the “bright side of the force is love, the dark side is hate... stick to the bright side.” President Barack Obama, meanwhile, described Mr. Lucas as “a vanguard of new Hollywood.”

Mr. Lucas’ wife, Mellody Hobson, spoke at the event, praising his talent as a filmmaker and warmth as a father. *Star Wars* is “not a movie about spaceships... but about family,” she said, explaining that the long breaks between Mr. Lucas’ movies came when he focused on his family.

Carrie Fisher, who portrays Princess Leia in *Star Wars*, appeared on stage as a hologram. “I wanted to be there to help celebrate your Kennedy Center honor in person, but hey, since you invented video voicemail, I don’t have to be,” she said. “Thank you for giving me one of my biggest roles... and most famous hairstyles.”