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Alumnus Richard Jenkins Nominated for Academy Award

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced this morning that Illinois Wesleyan University graduate Richard Jenkins has been nominated for best actor for his role in the film *The Visitor*.

Jenkins, who graduated in 1969 from Illinois Wesleyan, has been garnering praise for his role as a widowed college professor who discovers a pair of illegal aliens living in his New York apartment.

Variety's John Anderson declared "Jenkins has hooked us early and reels us in like fish." Jenkins had already been nominated for the Screen Actors Guild Award, a Critics Choice Award and the Chicago Film Critics Association Award for the role, as well as an Independent Spirit Award, his second after his Spirit nomination for 1996's *Flirting with Disaster*. The film also earned him the Silver St. George at the Moscow International Film Festival, and the Spotlight Award from the National Board of Review.

The Visitor marks Richard's first role as a leading man, though he has been seen in more than 40 films, and is known to audiences as the father in HBO's *Six Feet Under*. Yet it was his portrayal of Walter Vale in *The Visitor* that has catapulted him to international acclaim. Director Tom McCarthy — whose first film was the critically-acclaimed *The Station Agent* — wrote the role of disconnected, discontented economics professor Walter Vale with the 60-year-old Jenkins in mind.

Peter Travers of *Rolling Stone* magazine raved that Richard didn't merely "tackle" his role, he "wears it like a second skin." "In *The Visitor*, Jenkins delivers a master class in acting," Travers wrote. "Oscar, take note."

And Oscar® has. Jenkins will face fellow best actor nominees, Frank Langella, Sean Penn, Brad Pitt and Mickey Rourke, with winners announced in front of a worldwide broadcast of the 81st Annual Academy Awards on February 22.

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