# James Lipton

**James Lipton**
**Host, Inside the Actors Studio**

Though renowned as the wise host of the television program *Inside the Actors Studio*, James Lipton is also that program's creator, executive producer, and writer, not to mention being a multi-gifted actor, director, choreographer, producer, poet, and writer.

Lipton's father, Lawrence Lipton, was a beatnik poet, his mother, Betty Weinberg, was a teacher and librarian. Although attracted at first to the literary pursuits of his parents, Lipton chose a career as a lawyer. He originally took up acting as a way to finance his law studies, but eventually he shifted the focus of his career to acting.

Lipton moved to New York City and undertook 12 years of intensive studies in the performing arts. He studied under Stella Adler, one of the most respected acting teachers in the history of American dramatic arts, and with Harold Clurman and Robert Lewis. He studied movie and television production and directing at New York University and at The New School. He also studied voice, modern dance, and classical ballet.

Lipton performed in the play *The Autumn Garden* on Broadway in 1951. He joined the cast of *The Guiding Light* (1952), where he acted for several years and ultimately became its head writer. He wrote the book and the lyrics for two Broadway musicals, *Nowhere to Go but Up* (1962), and *Sherry!* (1967). Also for Broadway, he produced *The Mighty Gents* (1978), and *Monteith & Rand* (1979).

In the 1990s, as a vice president of the world-renowned Actors Studio, Lipton created an educational program for actors to impart what he had learned in the years of his own intensive studies and what the studio has given the world since 1947. With fellow studio members, including Paul Newman, Ellen Burstyn, Norman Mailer, and Lee Grant, Lipton brought together the Actors Studio and The New School for Social Research to form the Actors Studio Drama School, a graduate degree-granting program, which, with him as its founding dean, became the nation's largest graduate drama school. Lipton created a course within the school—a noncredit academic craft seminar that came to be known as *Inside the Actors Studio* (1994), where successful and accomplished actors, directors, and writers would be interviewed by Lipton and would answer questions from acting students.

In 2005, the school relocated to Pace University as the Actors Studio MFA Program, with Lipton serving as dean emeritus. Now housed at the Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts on Pace University's downtown Manhattan campus, Inside the Actors Studio is seen in 84 million American homes on the Bravo cable television network and around the world in 125 countries. It has received 12 Emmy Award nominations. Of the show, *The New York Times* has said, "In Mr. Lipton's guest chair, actors cease being stars for a while and become artists and teachers." His interviews with more than 200 of the world's most accomplished film, theater, and television artists have created a unique archive of in-depth studies of acting, directing, and writing.

He has completed a book called *Inside Inside*, an intimate portrait of *Inside the Actors Studio* and of his life and career, which will be published this fall. He also has been an active competitor in American Horse Show Association shows, showing hunters and jumpers. In 1995 he represented the United States Equestrian team in Grand Prix jumping at the Challenge of Champions. He is a licensed pilot. This June he will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Creative Arts and Entertainment Emmy Awards.

**Source URL:** http://www.pace.edu/commencement/commencement-2007/honorary-degree-recipients-0/james-lipton