



BRITISH ACADEMY TELEVISION AWARDS

FRENCH & SAUNDERS TO RECEIVE THE ACADEMY FELLOWSHIP

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On Sunday 26 April 2009, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts will present **Dawn French** and **Jennifer Saunders** with the Academy Fellowship at its annual Television Awards ceremony which will be broadcast on BBC One.

The Fellowship is the highest accolade bestowed by the Academy, and is presented in recognition of an outstanding body of work. Previous recipients of this prestigious award include Bruce Forsyth, Richard Curtis, Sir David Frost, David Jason, Dame Judi Dench, and Steven Spielberg.

The multi-award-winning pair met in 1978 whilst at the Central School of Speech and Drama. Although initially, they each found the other "aloof", they then started to collaborate and first came to the public's attention in the early 1980's when they performed at the London Club **The Comic Strip**.

Performing on British television for the first time in 1982 on **The Comic Strip Presents**, Jennifer and Dawn were meanwhile establishing themselves on the underground comedy scene, working with other up-and-coming comedians such as Adrian Edmondson.

The duo were launched into the public eye in 1987 when they embarked on their programme **French & Saunders** which ran for more than six seasons, ending in late 2007. Beginning humbly, but soon establishing itself as a fresh and dynamic new genre of show, spoofing all those around it, the pair were making their mark on the comedy world for both their writing and performing skills.

The show, now widely seen as ground-breaking for its satires of pop culture, celebrities, Art and films, has paved the way for comedians over the years and cemented the couple as comedy icons, respected by their fans and peers alike.

French & Saunders have also achieved phenomenal success individually, with Jennifer winning an Emmy and a BAFTA for writing and playing the part of Edina Monsoon in **Absolutely Fabulous**. Most recently she has won acclaim for writing and starring in another two sitcoms, **Jam and Jerusalem** and **The Life and Times of Vivienne Lyle**.

Dawn French is most well known for her role as the lovable vicar Geraldine Granger in the popular comedy **The Vicar of Dibley** and has recently moved into films, by



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voicing the character of Mrs Beaver in ***The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe***.

The pair have been firm supporters of **Comic Relief**, producing some of the most memorable sketches from over the years, most notably for Dawn's kiss with Hugh Grant and this year's comic take on **Mamma Mia**.

Their BAFTA Fellowship will mark the end of an era; their last ever concert and last time performing as a double act was **Still Alive**, which ran until the end of 2008.

The British Academy Television Awards will be broadcast on BBC1 on Sunday April 26

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BAFTA HISTORY

DAWN FRENCH

1988	NOMINATED	LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT PERFORMANCE	FRENCH & SAUNDERS
1990	NOMINATED	LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT PERFORMANCE	FRENCH & SAUNDERS
1997	NOMINATED	COMEDY PERFORMANCE	THE VICAR OF DIBLEY
1999	NOMINATED	COMEDY PERFORMANCE	THE VICAR OF DIBLEY
2000	NOMINATED	COMEDY PERFORMANCE	THE VICAR OF DIBLEY
2006	NOMINATED	COMEDY PERFORMANCE	THE VICAR OF DIBLEY

JENNIFER SAUNDERS

1992	WON	COMEDY PROGRAMME OR SERIES	ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS
1992	NOMINATED	LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT PERFORMANCE	ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS
1994	NOMINATED	COMEDY PROGRAMME OR SERIES	ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS
1994	NOMINATED	COMEDY PROGRAMME OR SERIES	ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS
1995	NOMINATED	COMEDY PROGRAMME OR SERIES	ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS
1996	NOMINATED	COMEDY PROGRAMME OR SERIES	ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS