

Introduction to Jane Alexander: 3:27 min. Photo: Lee Skye. Design: Raymond Elman. Music: Julie Maxwell.

A Video Chat with the Multi-Faceted Jane Alexander

By Elman + Skye + Weir

Jane Alexander (b.1939) is an American author, actress, and former director of the National Endowment for the Arts. She has received a Tony Award, two Emmy Awards and been nominated for four Academy Awards. She is also a naturalist and conservationist.

Alexander made her Broadway debut in 1968 in *The Great White Hope* and received the 1969 Tony Award for Best Featured Actress in a Play. Other Broadway credits include, *6 Rms Riv Vu* (1972), *The Night of the Iguana* (1988), *The Sisters Rosensweig* (1993) and *Honour* (1998). She has received a total of seven Tony Award nominations and was inducted into the American Theater Hall of Fame in 1994.

She also starred in the film version of *The Great White Hope* in 1970 and received the first of four Academy Award nominations for her performance. Her subsequent Oscar nominations were for *All the President's Men* (1976), *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979) and *Testament* (1983). An eight-time Emmy Award nominee, she received her first nomination for playing Eleanor Roosevelt in *Eleanor and Franklin* (1976), a role that required her to age from 18 to 60. She has won two Emmys for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Miniseries or Movie for *Playing for Time* (1980) and *Warm Springs* (2005).

In 1993, President Bill Clinton appointed Alexander chair of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Alexander moved to Washington, D.C., and served as chair of the NEA until 1997. Her book, *Command Performance: an Actress in the Theater of Politics* (2000), describes the challenges she faced leading the NEA at a time when Newt Gingrich was Speaker of the House (104th U.S. Congress), and unsuccessfully tried to shut down the NEA.

Alexander was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1999. In 2004, she joined the theater faculty at Florida State University.

She serves on various boards, including the Wildlife Conservation Society, the National Audubon Society, Project Greenhope, the National Stroke Association, and Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament. Alexander has received the Israel Cultural Award and the Helen Caldicott Leadership Award, and she is a fellow of the International Leadership Forum.

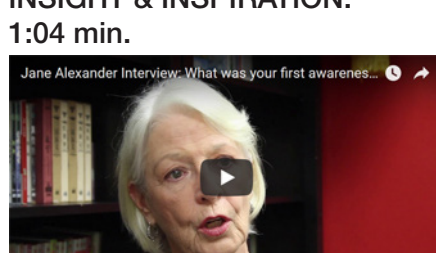
Alexander says, "I have been an amateur naturalist most of my life, a birder for two thirds of my life, and a wildlife conservationist for the past 40 years."

In her most recent book, *Wild Things, Wild Places* (2016), Alexander offers a moving first-hand assessment of what is being done to help the planet's most at risk animals. In short reflections on her travels to some of the most remote and forbidding areas on Earth, she describes the ways in which human incursions into the natural world are destroying wildlife around the globe. Alexander highlights the remarkable work done in the fields of science and conservation, and introduces readers to the field biologists, zoologists, environmentalists, and conservationists—the "prophets in the wilderness"—who have committed themselves to this essential effort.

The videos below are organized by topic and run between 60 seconds and 6 minutes. Click on any video. You must be connected to the Internet to view the videos.

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION:

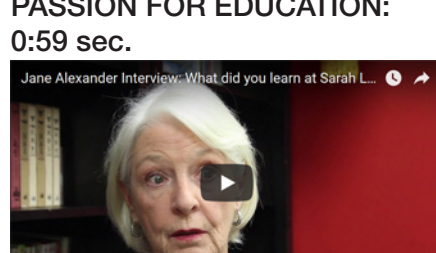
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What was your first awareness of Walden Pond?

PASSION FOR EDUCATION:

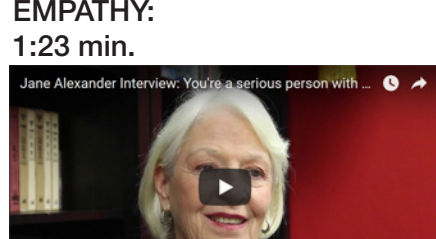
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What did you learn at Sarah Lawrence College that impacted your career?

EMPATHY:

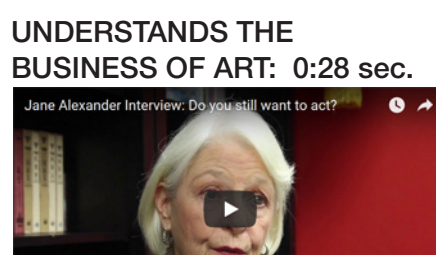
1:23 min.



You're a serious person with deep intellectual interests. How did you interact with the vacuous people you might find in Hollywood?

UNDERSTANDS THE BUSINESS OF ART:

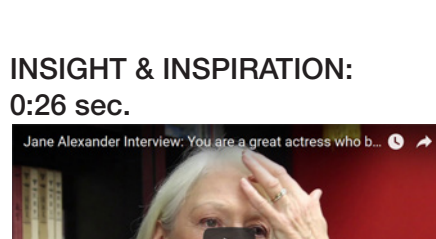
0:28 sec.



We have seen many of your performances as an actress and greatly admire your talent. Do you still want to act? Or have all of your other activities taken control of your time and focus?

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION:

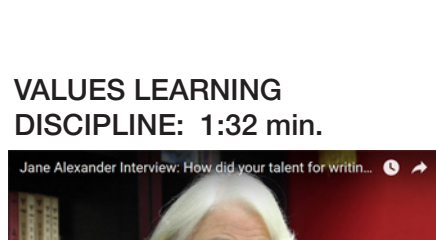
0:26 sec.



You are a great actress who became a politician. We are more used to the notion of not-so-great actors who become politicians.

VALUES LEARNING DISCIPLINE:

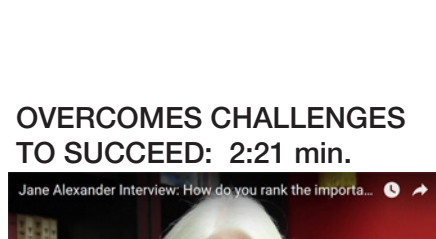
1:32 min.



How did your talent for writing evolve?

OVERCOMES CHALLENGES TO SUCCEED:

2:21 min.



How do you rank the importance or value of your different careers — actress, head of the NEA, author, environmental activist?