

Video

The Norfolk story of our Golden Globe star Olivia Colman

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Olivia Colman, winner of Best Actress - Motion Picture, Musical or Comedy at the Golden Globe Awards. (Photo by: Paul Drinkwater/NBC)

The headmaster of Norfolk-born actress Olivia Colman's former school praised the Golden Globe winner as "wonderful, warm and down to earth" as he spoke of her time there.



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Douglas Robb, headmaster at Holt's Gresham's School, said he had sent a message of congratulations to the star of historical drama *The Favourite* "on behalf of the school".

He said: "We're hugely pleased for her and think she's wonderful."

The acclaimed British thespian picked up the award for Best Actress in a musical or comedy for her performance as Queen Anne at a star-studded ceremony in Beverly Hills, California, on Sunday night.

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The advertisement features a bright yellow background with a blue diagonal stripe on the left. At the top, it says 'ADVERTISING' and has a play button icon. The main text 'HP Tango' is in large black font. Below it, there's a 'WORKS WITH alexa' logo and the 'instant ink' logo. A white HP Tango printer is shown on the right, with a photo of a dog being printed. At the bottom, it says 'Print with voice'.

Mr Robb said: "Olivia came back last year to open a boarding house for us and talked to pupils all afternoon.



Olivia Colman poses in the press room with the award for best performance by an actress in a motion picture.

"She's absolutely wonderful, warm [and] massively down to earth."

He added: "She's been back a couple of times."

"She's close friends with some of the people here [and] we have an ongoing relationship with her as a friend of the school."

He described her win as "fantastic" and said: "We've got a great tradition of drama here and a lovely theatre, The Auden."



Olivia Colman with her upper sixth theatre studies classmates during the 1992-93 school year. Photo: Gresham's School archive.

"Olivia's not the only actor who's left Gresham's."

The school has also produced *Eragon* and *Helen of Troy* actress Sienna Guillory, and Miranda Raison, who appeared alongside Colman in *Murder on the Orient Express*, and will star in 2019's *Artemis Fowl*.

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Norfolk-born Colman, 44, was reportedly "gutted" to have missed the chance to collect her Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actress in a series, mini-series or TV movie for her role in thriller *The Night Manager*, in 2017.



Olivia Colman in The Favourite. Photo: PA

But she later lent Gresham's her trophy for their exhibition: *Inventing the Future*.

The special exhibit, held in September 2018, celebrating the contribution that Gresham's pupils have made to arts, design and engineering, and saw Colman's Golden Globe rub shoulders with architecture, boats, and the International Peace Symbol at the school.

Mr Robb added: "Her major influence from Gresham's was a chap who retired a few years ago - a drama teacher called Paul Hands.

"In her first BAFTA speech, she thanked him, and said 'thank you very much Mr Hands'.



Actress Olivia Colman with sixth form students at Gresham's School speech day. Photo: Archant

Colman later told a Radio Times interviewer her former teacher had been "inundated with requests from the media", prompting her to send him an email apologising.

She also famously chose to celebrate her double BAFTA win in 2013 by going home after the ceremony for a cup of tea with her husband, Ed Sinclair, which Mr Robb described as "far more her style than raving until dawn".

He added: "Olivia was at school with a guy who was a maths teacher here.

"They were leads in a musical together - Guys and Dolls - and they are still close pals."



Norfolk-born actress Olivia Colman who had won a Golden Globe. Photo: Dominic Lipinski/PA Wire

Colman was born in Norfolk in 1974 and attended Norwich High School for Girls, before attending Gresham's sixth form in the early 1990s.

She spent a term at Homerton College, Cambridge, before going on to study drama at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School,

Her first job was at The King's Arms pub in Blakeney, north Norfolk.

She previously described the area as her "stomping ground" and "spiritual home", and spoke of the idyllic childhood she enjoyed; from revising for her A-Levels on Holkham beach or just being able to open the back door and go off for the whole day.



Sarah Colman in 'Prime of Miss Jean Brodie' (Oakeley).

Olivia Colman in Prime of Miss Jean Brodie during the winter school term of 1991-92. Photo: Gresham's School archive.

"My favourite childhood memory was going crabbing with my family," she said.

"We used to sit on a muddy bridge with a string and a bit of bacon and catch crabs, then do a crab race at the end. It was important just because nobody was working, we were all mucking about, we all got on and we had fun."

Colman is set to take over from Claire Foy in the role of Queen Elizabeth II in award-winning Netflix drama *The Crown*, and is currently appearing as the innkeeper's wife Madame Thénardier in a BBC adaptation of the classic novel by French writer Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*.

What are your memories of Olivia Colman growing up in Norfolk? Email reporter Jessica.Frank-Keyes@archant.co.uk



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Actress Olivia Colman with sixth form students Alicia Stark and Callum Chapman at Gresham's School speech day. Photo: Archant



Olivia Colman in Les Miserables. Photo: BBC/Lookout Point/Mitch Jenkins