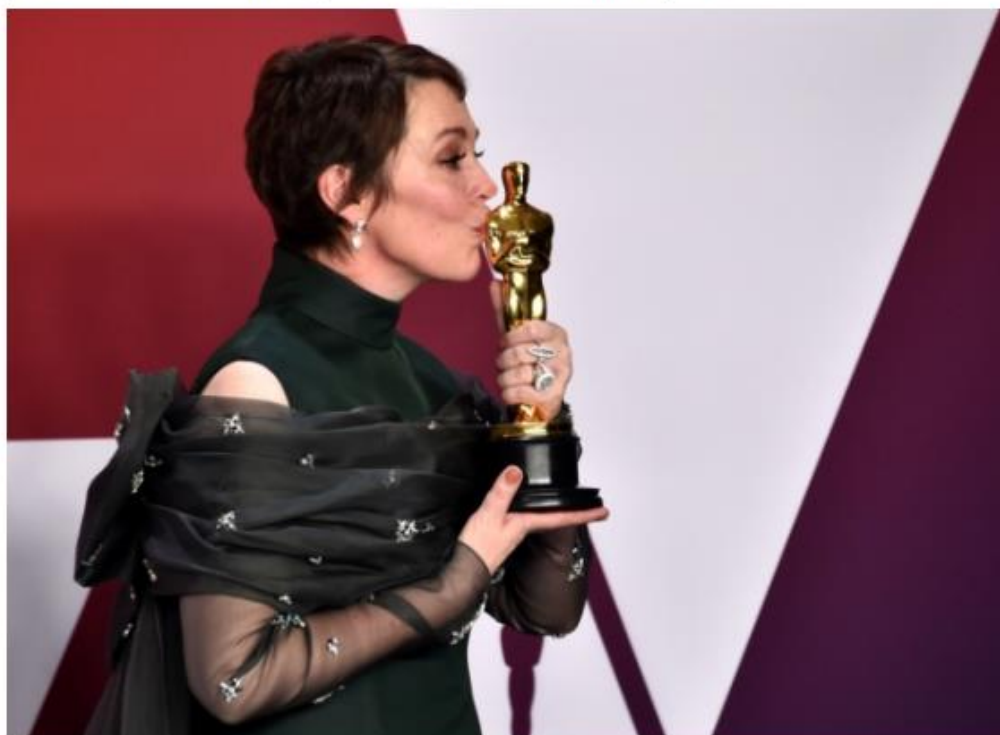


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Headmaster of Olivia Colman's former school praises 'phenomenal talent'

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Olivia Colman, winner of the Best Actress In A Leading Role Award for The Favourite. Picture Alberto Rodriguez/PA Wire.

The Oscar-winning Olivia Colman has been described as "tremendous" by the headmaster of the Norfolk school she attended as a teenager.

The Norfolk-born actress went to Gresham's School in Holt, north Norfolk, during the nineties.

She has openly praised the school for inspiring and supporting her on her way towards her acting career - especially its former, now retired, director of drama, Paul Hands.

Mr Hands was her drama teacher when she was in the sixth form at Gresham's when the young Olivia was known as Sarah as she studied for her A-Levels.

Headmaster, Douglas Robb, described her as a "tremendous person", not just as an actress but also as an individual.



Headmaster of Gresham School Douglas Robb has spoken about ex-pupil Olivia Colman's Oscar win. Picture : ANTONY KELLY

"She is a really lovely person and a phenomenal talent - authentic and real," he said.

"She's not got a bit of diva in her. She's great.

"We've always promoted Olivia and her success at the school - as we do all of our students - and we will continue to do so in the future."

Ms Colman provided the Oscars with one of the biggest surprises of the night when she won this year's best actress for her role as Queen Anne in the black comedy *The Favourite*.

The quirky comedy-drama had 10 nominations at the start of the evening but reward for Ms Colman's stand-out performance was the only golden trophy they bagged.

The actress was tearful and clearly overwhelmed as she gave a joyous, seemingly off-the-cuff speech in which she thanked virtually everyone family, friends, co-stars Rachel Weisz and Emma Stone as well as fellow nominees. "It's genuinely quite stressful," she said, "This is hilarious - I've won an Oscar!"

Ms Colman [spent her formative years at Norwich High School for Girls](#), joining the fee-paying school in 1982 aged 11.

She spent eight years at the Norwich faculty on Newmarket Road, graduating in 1990 before moving to Gresham's School.