



USA TODAY

Ali MacGraw and Ryan O'Neal return to Harvard 45 years after 'Love Story'

Maria Puente, USA TODAY 5:43 p.m. EST February 1, 2016



Ali MacGraw and Ryan O'Neal drove an antique MG convertible to Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., on Feb. 1, 2016, more than 45 years after their 1970 classic 'Love Story.' (Photo: Elise Amendola, AP)

In Hollywood, love means never having to say you're sorry about cheeky promotion of your latest project.

So it was that Ali MacGraw and Ryan O'Neal, driving a super-cool car, returned to Harvard University Monday, a little more than 45 years after their soppy duet in *Love Story* soaked a million hankies and turned them into major movie stars.

Their return was aimed at promoting their national tour of *Love Letters*, a play about a couple who maintain contact over 50 years through notes, cards and letters. (Snail mail, for all you texting fiends.)

They begin a one-week engagement at Boston's Citi Shubert Theatre on Tuesday.



Ryan O'Neal and Ali MacGraw arrive for royal performance of 'Love Story' in London, in March 1971. (Photo: AP)
Now in their 70s and still a pair of faces meant for the big screen, MacGraw and O'Neal arrived on campus in an antique MG convertible similar to the one in their 1970 movie about a rich-and-preppy Harvard student who marries a working-class Radcliffe girl over his parents' objections.

Then she becomes terminally ill. Much weeping ensues.

(Yes, children, *The Fault In Our Stars* has antecedents, in the movies and in literature.)

O'Neal, despite decades of drinking and dustups, even managed to pull off wearing a jaunty college striped scarf wrapped around his neck.

Both were grayer but retained enough of the good looks that made them so charismatic so many years ago in the romantic tragedy (*Romeo and Juliet* at Harvard), based on a best-selling novel of the same name by Erich Segal. "Love means never having to say you're sorry," was the memorable tagline for the book and the movie.

Love Story won one Oscar (for best score) and was nominated for six others, including Best Picture, Best Actor and Best Actress in leading roles.

Later, the two reflected on their mutual past before an audience of current Harvard students, in a conversation moderated by arts journalist Alicia Anstead.



Ryan O'Neal and Ali MacGraw hold hands during talk with Harvard students in Cambridge, Mass. (Photo: Elise Amendola, AP)

Holding hands, both said the movie has special meaning to them considering where life has taken them since it made them household names.

O'Neal, 74, noted that cancer, as in the movie, has played a big part in his real life, including his battle with leukemia.

MacGraw, 76, said being back on campus recalled wonderful memories that few of her subsequent experiences in film ever captured.

And both admitted they had a crush on each other during filming.

Contributing: The Associated Press