

**FOR RELEASE ON OR AFTER FEBRUARY 14, 2007**

**Contact: Dr. Mary-Lou Galician**

**DrFUN@RealisticRomance.com**

**Phone: 480-965-5066 or 480-838-0003**

*[THE COMPLETE LIST OF AWARDEES WITH CITATIONS IS AT THE END  
OF THIS RELEASE -- AND ONLINE AT [www.RealisticRomance.com](http://www.RealisticRomance.com).]*

**“Realistic Romance® Guru” Dr. Mary-Lou Galician confers her  
5<sup>th</sup> annual *Dr. FUN’s Stupid Cupid & Realistic Romance® Awards™*  
for Mass Media Portrayals of Sex, Love, and Romance**

***“Failure to Launch” Gets the Stupidest Cupid Award™;***

***“Date Movie” wins the Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™;***

**24 individual awards go to popular films, TV shows, songs, and major magazines**

February 14, 2007 – As she does each Valentine’s Day, university professor and media literacy advocate Dr. Mary-Lou Galician (affectionately known as “Dr. FUN”) has conferred her annual *Dr. FUN’s Stupid Cupid & Realistic Romance® Awards™* for 2006 Mass Media Portrayals of Sex, Love & Romance.

**“Failure to Launch” got the overall Stupidest Cupid Award™** for perpetuating the most myths and stereotypes, while **“Date Movie” won the Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™** for spoofing unhealthy media messages.

All 26 award recipients -- which include blockbuster films, top-rated TV shows, popular songs, and major magazines -- are detailed online at [www.RealisticRomance.com](http://www.RealisticRomance.com).

The Awards were established by Galician, creator of *Realistic Romance®* (The Thinking Person’s Relationship Remedy™) and Head of Media Analysis and Criticism in the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communication at Arizona State University, as part of her media literacy mission to direct public attention to unhealthy, dangerous media myths and to help people “get real about romance.”

Galician is an expert on the influence of mass media portrayals on real-life relationships. She is the author of *Sex, Love, and Romance in the Mass Media: Analysis and Criticism of Unrealistic Portrayals and Their Influence* (Erlbaum, 2004) and *Critical Thinking About Sex, Love, and Romance in the Mass Media: Media Literacy Applications* (Erlbaum, 2007). Her new

book for the general public (available soon) is *Dr. Galician's Prescriptions© for REALISTIC ROMANCE: How the Media Seduce You to Want Prince Charmings or Playboy Centerfolds*.

**The 12 Stupid Cupid Awards™** -- one for each of the dozen major myths that Galician's research has identified as affecting perceptions of romance and that comprise her *Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz©* (in her books and online at [www.RealisticRomance.com](http://www.RealisticRomance.com)) -- focus attention on mythic and stereotypic media portrayals that Galician says people should never use as models for their own lives. A 13<sup>th</sup> Award -- the Stupidest Cupid Award™ -- is given to portrayal with the most myths and stereotypes.

**The 12 Realistic Romance® Awards™** -- one for each of *Dr. Galician's Prescriptions© (Rxs) for Getting Real About Romance* ("antidotes" to the 12 myths and stereotypes) -- honor the rarer media portrayals of healthy coupleship. The Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™ goes to the overall best example.

More than 1,000 nominations came from the public -- via online ballots -- and Galician's students. Awardees were then selected by a panel of judges who joined Galician: Dr. David Natharius, ASU Adjunct Professor of Visual Communication, who is also Galician's husband and a gender communication expert; Sam Alpert, Partner, David and Sam PR, Phoenix, and Alison Bailin, Account Executive, HMA Public Relations, Phoenix (former students of Galician); and current Cronkite School students Jessica Douglas, Katy Reno, Sky Schaudt, and Jennifer Wahl. Special Hollywood judge was Marta Kos of E! Entertainment, also a former student of Galician.

"Failure to Launch" starring Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew McConaughey got this year's overall Stupidest Cupid Award™ for being "a failure when it comes to offering healthy models of sex, love, and romance. Instead, it promotes a majority of *Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz©* myths and stereotypes: not only the film's dangerous primary theme -- the love of a good woman can fix any man (Myth #7) -- but also your perfect partner is pre-destined (#1), the objectified model-like beauty attracts the man (#5) with easy and wonderful sex (#4), and you're incomplete (and, in this film, unable to function) without a romantic partner (#10)."

In addition to "Failure to Launch," Stupid Cupid Awardees for the 12 individual myths include popular movies "The Lake House," "Cars," "Superman Returns," "Tristan + Isolde," "The DaVinci Code," "The Break-Up," and "Step Up"; television's "Grey's Anatomy," "Dr. 90210," "Nip/Tuck," "The Girls Next Door," "'Til Death," "King of Queens," and soap operas and dating shows; magazines *Maxim* and *Cosmo*; popular songs "What's Left of Me," "Read My Mind," and "My Little Girl"; media coverage (and irrational

fans) of “TomKat” and “Brangelina,” and “media critics who describe mythic and stereotypic portrayals as ‘completely harmless’” along with “schools that don’t provide media literacy education.”

“Unfortunately, Stupid Cupid nominees abound in the media,” Galician explains, “but it’s much more difficult to find examples of healthy models of sex, love, and romance that are entertaining and appealing.”

In fact, this year’s Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™ for “Date Movie” marks a departure from past years’ awardees (including cinema’s “The 40-Year-Old Virgin” and “Legally Blonde” and TV’s “She’s With Me”) in that it spoofs romantic media myths and stereotypes rather than actually presenting prescriptive portrayals of healthy relational strategies. Nevertheless, according to its award citation, “Although it isn’t a great movie, the parody makes us laugh at the myths and stereotypes in most romantic media – and that’s a valuable media literacy service.”

Several other satires were included among the media portrayals honored with the individual Realistic Romance® Awards™ for rare healthier portrayals include the movies “Friends with Money,” “Phat Girls,” “She’s the Man,” “X-Men: The Last Stand,” and “Borat”; TV’s “Grey’s Anatomy,” “The Ghost Whisperer,” “One Tree Hill,” “The Medium,” “The Office,” “7<sup>th</sup> Heaven,” “South Park,” and “Extras”; and popular songs “Walk Away,” “I Belong to Me,” and “Stupid Girls.”

Galician also noted that she had to include a “caution” in the citations of several of the Realistic Romance® Awardees because “even though we honored them for positive *steps* in the right direction -- such as ‘Grey’s Anatomy’'s Meredith Grey’s getting real about her obsession with Dr. McDreamy and ‘considering countless candidates’ (Rx #1), the majority of the portrayals on this top-rated show are unhealthy. Ironically, the show also earned a Stupid Cupid Award™ for Myth #9 (‘All you really need is love, so it doesn’t matter if you and your partner have very different values.’), which is constantly illustrated by Dr. Burke and Dr. Yang.”

Another irony is the awarding of a Stupid Cupid to Nick Lachey’s “What’s Left of Me” for Myth #10 (“The right make ‘completes you’ – filling your needs and making your dreams come true.”), while former wife Jessica Simpson’s “I Belong to Me” won the Realistic Romance® Award™ for the antidote, Rx #10 (“Cultivate Your Own Completeness”).

Galician's research of what she calls "The Romanticization of Love in the Mass Media" examines how mass media portrayals of sex, love, and romance affect nearly everyone – men and women, young children and seniors, singles and couples – even though we might not realize it.

"People in my studies with unrealistic expectations are less satisfied in their own romantic relationships," says Galician, who is known as the nation's Realistic Romance® Guru, "and many of these unrealistic expectations come from media we enjoy without fully considering how they influence us at a subconscious level.

"It's also important to remember that when I say 'realistic' I don't mean 'normal,'" she adds, "I mean 'healthy'. I don't want you to lower your standards: I actually want you to raise your standards but lower your mythic and stereotypic expectations, which are unhealthy."

Galician insists that her work "is *not* about censorship or avoiding media. It's all about being a wise media consumer, about using the media instead of the letting media use you, and about 'getting real about romance' to be more successful and happier."

She notes, "It's important to take time to consider how mass media portrayals at the least reinforce – if not create – unrealistic expectations that most of us can't dismiss completely. First we have to understand where they come from. Then we must learn how to analyze and critique them and, most important, how to reframe them more constructively.

Galician's books and programs offer her *7-Step Reality Check-Up*® for analyzing and criticizing unrealistic portrayals. She even includes suggestions about how parents should debrief their children after they view cartoon classics like "Beauty and the Beast" and "Lady and the Tramp" (and this year's Stupid Cupid winner, "Cars"), which are seemingly harmless but filled with myths and stereotypes.

"We can still enjoy the 'escape' that unrealistic romantic media portrayals offer us," Galician says, "but it's not wise to use them -- or media celebrities -- as models in our real lives.

"It's much healthier and smarter to make yourself the hero or heroine of your own true love story."

Her ultimate advice for Valentine's Day -- and every day: "Get real about romance!"

For more information about Galician's *Dr. FUN's Stupid Cupid & Realistic Romance® Awards™*

or to arrange a print or broadcast interview with "Dr. FUN"

(who IS indeed a very FUN interview!),

**please contact Dr. Mary-Lou Galician directly:**

**at ASU: DrFUN@asu.edu • 480-965-5066;**

**at Realistic Romance®: DrFUN@RealisticRomance.com • 480-838-0003.**

*A complete listing of this year's 26 awards*

*-- with the citations that explain why the award was made --*

*appears on the following pages*

*as well as on Dr. Galician's web site:*

**www.RealisticRomance.com.**

Streaming video of Dr. Galician's announcing of the awards is also at

**www.RealisticRomance.com.**

**NOTE TO EDITORS:**

Do NOT edit the wording of the 12 numbered one-sentence copyrighted Myths or 12 numbered one-sentence Prescriptions (Rxs).

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Realistic Romance® Awards™ -- which honor 2006 mass media portrayals that model one or more of the 12 Prescriptions© (Rxs) of Dr. Galician's Prescriptions© for Getting Real About Romance - follow this listing of the Stupid Cupids Awards™.

**The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Dr. FUN's Stupid Cupid Awards™**

**(conferred on 2006 mass media portrayals  
that exemplify one or more of the unhealthy 12 Myths & Stereotypes of  
Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz©)**

These mass media portrayals that appeared in 2006 illustrate the 12 media myths and stereotypes of *Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz©*. The portrayal with the most myths and stereotypes gets *Dr. FUN's Stupidest Cupid Award™*.

It's OK to enjoy them, but make sure you're aware of the unhealthy models they promote.

For each myth, see the "antidote" -- the comparable *Dr. Galician Prescription©* (Rx) in the listing of the 12 Realistic Romance® Awards™ (below).

**Dr. FUN's Stupidest Cupid Award™**

**Awardee: "Failure to Launch"**

This popular film starring Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew McConaughey is indeed a failure when it comes to offering healthy models of sex, love, and romance. Instead, it promotes a majority of *Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz©* myths and stereotypes: not only the film's dangerous primary theme -- the love of a good woman can fix any man (Myth #7) -- but also your perfect partner is pre-destined (#1), the objectified model-like beauty attracts the man (#5) with easy and wonderful sex (#4), and you're incomplete (and, in this film, unable to function) without a romantic partner (#10).

**Myth No. 1: Your perfect partner is cosmically predestined, so nothing/nobody can ultimately separate you.**

**Awardee: "The Lake House" (film)**

"Living two years apart" can't ultimately separate these two "meant-for-each-other" pen pals with a magical mailbox because they're "destined" to be together in this time-travel tale of a truly long-distance relationship that defies death and challenges common sense.

**Myth No. 2: There's such a thing as "love at first sight."**

**Awardee: "Cars" (animated film)**

Although parents think they can always trust Disney, they should "debrief" this road

trip's relational strategies with their children: Lightning McQueen – the hot-shot red race car – does learn a healthy lesson about what's really important outside of the fast lane, but his love-at-first-sight pursuit of Sally Carrera (the sexy blue Porsche) is a cartoon cliché (see also Myth #7).

**Myth No. 3: Your true soul mate should know what you're thinking or feeling (without your having to tell).**

**Awardee: "Superman Returns" (film)**

Journalist Lois Lane could use some serious editing of her communication skills when it comes to being honest with the clueless father of her child, and the Man of Steel himself could use some glasses (maybe Clark Kent's or the goofy ones that audience members have to put on and off in this 3-D saga?) to gain perspective about what mature lovers must communicate courageously (see Rx #3), especially about their responsibilities toward their child.

**Dis-honorable mention: "Read My Mind" (song)**

**Myth No. 4: If your partner is truly meant for you, sex is easy and wonderful.**

**Awardees: "Tristan + Isolde" (film)**

You can't call it "being intimate" (Tristan doesn't even know Isolde's real name!), but the instantly steamy sexual union of these two medieval lovers is epic and eternal.

**Dis-honorable mention: soap operas (TV)**

**Myth No. 5: To attract and keep a man, a woman should look like a model or a centerfold.**

**Awardee (tie): "Nip/Tuck" (television) and "Dr. 20910" (television)**

From the plastic surgeons' "Tell me what you don't like about yourself" (as in "You're never hot enough!") to the mutilating transformation of already attractive women into Barbie-doll perfection, these series promote unrealistic expectations in both sexes, along with inadequacy issues and a slasher-like surgical solution to relationship problems.

**Dis-honorable mentions: "The Girls Next Door" (television); dating shows (television); *Cosmo* and *Maxim* (magazines)**

**Myth No. 6: The man should not be shorter, weaker, younger, poorer, or less successful than the woman.**

**Awardee: "The DaVinci Code" (film)**

Although the theme purports to tout the importance of valuing women as highly as men, the narrative demonstrates a different story: At every twist and turn the heroine is mere arm candy to the novelist's super-hero alter-ego, who is superior in every way to his female "side-kick" love interest (including the unequal star power and ages of the Tom Hanks and Audrey Tatou).

**Dis-honorable mention: "Superman Returns"**

**Myth No. 7: The love of a good and faithful true woman can change a man from a "beast" into a "prince."**

**Awardee: "Failure to Launch"**

Beauty Sarah Jessica Parker is a professional change-artist who turns commitment-

phobic playboy Matthew McConaughey into a proposing prince that pleases even his parents.

**Myth No. 8: Bickering and fighting a lot mean that a man and a woman really love each other passionately.**

**Awardee: "The Break-Up" (film)**

It's like watching train-wreck victims in painful slow motion to sit through this movie that never shows us any basis for genuine love between these two ill-matched non-stop brutal battlers who disrespectfully argue about anything and everything – and mistake the heat for passion.

**Dis-honorable mentions: "Til Death" (television); "King of Queens" (television); "When You're Mad" (song)**

**Myth No. 9: All you really need is love, so it doesn't matter if you and your lover have very different values.**

**Awardee: "Grey's Anatomy" (television)**

Dr. Yang and Dr. Burke want totally things from life, but that doesn't cure this media duo from the irrational illusion that "love" is all they need -- and there's even a Preston Burke/Cristina Yang fan-listing site dedicated to this fatuous romance, from which they need to be surgically removed.

**Dis-honorable mention: "Step Up" (film)**

**Myth No. 10: The right mate "completes you" -- filling your needs and making your dreams come true.**

**Awardees: "What's Left of Me" (song)**

Imploring ex-wife Jessica Simpson to "Take what's left of this man/Make me whole once again," this song by "broken," "fading," "hardly breathing" Nick Lachey fosters unhealthy enmeshment and pathetic dependence – ironically making the completely opposite musical statement from the former Mrs. Lachey, whose "I Belong to Me" won the *Realistic Romance® Award™* for recommending this myth's antidote (see Rx #10, below).

**Dis-honorable mention: "My Little Girl" (song)**

**Myth No. 11: In real life, actors and actresses are often very much like the romantic characters they portray.**

**Awardee: Media coverage (and irrational fans) of "TomKat" and "Brangelina" for confusing these stars' reel lives with their real lives -- and conflating announcements of births/adoptions and weddings (in that less-than-ideal order) with breaking news**

Many fans become disappointed when their superstar idols resemble fallible human beings. And, reinforcing the mythology, news editors eagerly seeking these readers and viewers covered these couples only in entertainment features but also alongside serious national news.

**Myth No. 12: Since mass media portrayals of romance aren't "real," they don't really affect you.**

**Awardees (tie): Media critics who describe mythic and stereotypic portrayals as "completely harmless"; schools that don't provide media literacy education.**

Critics – Although we can still enjoy mythic portrayals of sex, love, and romance in the mass media, research shows they can lead to harmful unrealistic expectations. It's

irresponsible to label all these portrayals as completely harmless simply because they're fluffy and vacuous.

Schools – Media literacy offers foundational concepts and applicable strategies for helping media consumers of all ages to stay in control of the media they use and enjoy -- rather than allowing the media to control them. We can and should still enjoy the media, but it's important to learn how to “dis-illusion” ourselves and our media! Media literacy education in other English-speaking nations is far ahead of the United States. It's high time for us to catch up.

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**The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Dr. FUN's Realistic Romance® Awards™**

**(honoring 2006 mass media portrayals  
that model one or more of the 12 Prescriptions© [Rxs]  
of Dr. Galician's Prescriptions© for Getting Real About Romance)**

These mass media portrayals that appeared in 2006 illustrate the 12 prescriptions for healthy relationships. Each one is an "antidote" to the comparable *Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz©* myth or stereotype in the listing of the 12 Stupid Cupid Awards™ (above).

**Dr. FUN's Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™**

**Awardee: Date Movie (film)**

Although it isn't a great movie, the parody makes us laugh at the myths and stereotypes in most romantic media - and that's a valuable media literacy service.

**Rx No. 1: Consider countless candidates.**

**Awardee: "Grey's Anatomy" (film) - with CAUTION**

After winning last year's Stupid Cupid Award™ for Myth #3, Dr. Meredith Grey deserves credit for (finally!) getting real about her obsession with Dr. McDreamy and choosing instead to pursue a more healthy behavior by dating several others. George also learned that Meredith isn't the only woman for him. However, the "caution" is issued because the majority of the portrayals on this top-rated show are unhealthy. In fact, the show also earned a Stupid Cupid Award™ for Myth #9 (see above).

**Rx No. 2: Consult your calendar and count carefully.**

**Awardee: "Friends with Money" (film) - with CAUTION**

Jennifer Aniston's character takes time to get to know a potential dating partner who doesn't appeal to her at "first sight" - but the "caution" is issued because of the underlying Myth #5.

**Rx No. 3: Communicate courageously.**

**Awardee: "The Ghost Whisperer" (television)**

Jennifer Love Hewitt's Melinda Gordon not only communicates with ghostly spirits to help them complete their unfinished earthly business but she also brings this skill home to husband Jim, with whom she engages in respectful and heartfelt healthy discussions rarely demonstrated by media couples.

**Rx No. 4: Concentrate on commitment and constancy.**

**Awardee: "One Tree Hill" (television) - with CAUTION**

Although this series demonstrates harmful myths, it also at least attempted to temper the gratuitous sex with a storyline about a couple who wait for marriage: Haley and Nathan.

**Rx No. 5: Cherish completeness in companions (not just the cover).**

**Awardees: "Phat Girlz" (film)**

In more stereotypic portrayals, women who are less than model-esque must settle for unattractive or less successful romantic partners (if they get any at all) -- but in this inspiring story that concentrates on the importance of inner beauty, plus-size Mo'nique not only gets the man but a successful, dreamy hunk who values her as a total person.

**Rx No. 6: Create coequality; cooperate.**

**Awardees (tie): "The Medium" (television) and "She's the Man" (film)**

"The Medium" - Patricia Arquette's Allison DuBois is a medium with a rare media husband: Joe happily shares household responsibilities (sometimes cooking or driving the children to school), and Allison often takes charge when necessary - resulting in a loving, supportive relationship built on trust and respect.

"She's the Man" - Putting a modern spin on Shakespeare, this soccer story shows that girls and boys can be equals in the sports as well as in the romantic arena.

**Rx No. 7: Cease correcting and controlling; you can't change others (only yourself!).**

**Awardee: "X-Men: The Last Stand" (film)**

Despite his love for Jean Grey (Famke Janssen), Wolverine (played by Hugh Jackman) realizes that he cannot control the evil side of this powerful woman and he must let her go - movingly illustrating not only this Rx but also the metaphoric application of the Myth: understanding the good and evil within each of us.

**Honorable mention: "Walk Away" (song)**

**Rx No. 8: Courtesy counts; constant conflicts create chaos.**

**Awardee: "The Office" (television)**

Pam and Jim poignantly prove that a courteous couple can win our hearts and hold our attention without bickering and fighting.

**Rx No. 9: Crave common core-values.**

**Awardee: "7<sup>th</sup> Heaven" (television)**

Back by popular demand, this series consistently illustrates the benefits of shared values, which goes beyond its focus on one religion and makes its lessons accessible to a diverse audience.

**Rx No. 10: Cultivate your own completeness.**

**Awardee: "I Belong to Me" (song)**

In dramatic and ironic contrast to ex-husband Nick Lachey (whose mournful tune about being less than whole got this year's Stupid Cupid Award™ for Myth #10; see above), Jessica Simpson literally provides the antidote in her hymn to self-confidence ("I don't need

somebody to complete me, I complete myself." "I'm one, not half of two," "Who I am is not about who I am with").

**Rx No. 11: De-construct celebrities.**

**Awardee : "Borat" (film)**

In his brilliant satire of the popular culture's myths and stereotypes (which some audience members thought was serious), Sasha Baron Cohen DDDe-constructes iconic media babe "Pam-ella" Anderson (who was apparently in on the joke), including having his Borat character ultimately forsake the "Baywatch" bombshell for his "real" girl back home.

**Honorable mentions: "Extras" (television); "South Park" (television)**

**Rx No. 12: Calculate the very real consequences of unreal media.**

**Awardee: "Stupid Girls" (song)**

Pink's satire of Hollywood hotties and media moneymakers removes the veneer from pop culture personalities (Rx #11) and other myths and stereotypes of sex, love, and romance - and, in her warning about this "epidemic" whose cure requires the public not to be "stupid girls," she points out the need women and men to think critically about how the popular culture affects us as individuals and as a society with global influence ("the word believes it").

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