



Berkeley FILM Foundation Hosts Its Third Annual Fundraising Gala

\$162,000 in grants awarded to 15 East Bay filmmakers including four student filmmakers.

Berkeley, CA (November 7, 2011)—Building on its significant success during challenging economic times, the Berkeley FILM Foundation (BFF) will host its third annual fundraiser and celebration on Thursday, November 10, 2011, at the Zaentz Media Center in Berkeley.

The BFF awarded 15 grants for 2011. Winners shared \$162,000 in grants -- including the second annual Saul Zaentz Award and four awards to a new student category. With these awards in place, the BFF has distributed \$400,000 in grants to local independent filmmakers since its inception in 2009.

The Berkeley FILM Foundation is a 501(c)(3) grant program for independent filmmakers annually funded by the City of Berkeley, Wareham Development, and the Saul Zaentz Company with a mission to nurture, sustain and preserve the thriving Berkeley film community while attracting the next generation of filmmakers. The BFF focuses on supporting the ideals reflected in Berkeley culture: social, historical and innovative documentary and dramatic works.

Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates said the collaboration between the private sector and the city to make the BFF a reality was particularly rewarding for him personally. "I am so proud that the Berkeley FILM Foundation has continued to flourish and support some truly amazing films. With the help from our partners at the Saul Zaentz Company and Wareham Development, the BFF bolsters our reputation as a city that knows how to grow and nurture its creative community," said Bates.

Wareham Development, a key private sector force behind the success of the program and the owner of Berkeley's Zaentz Media Center, is encouraged that the BFF is able to attract support for the artistic community even in tough times. "Funding for arts has suffered mightily in recent years and it's everyone's job to make sure artists like these continue to document the political, social and historical context of our lives here in the Bay Area and around the world. The BFF is determined to make sure that both the public and private sectors are equally focused on supporting these artists through every stage of their careers," said Wareham founder, Rich Robbins.

Over the past three years the Berkeley FILM Foundation has funded such important films as:

The Barber of Birmingham: Foot Soldier of the Civil Rights Movement, which received both a BFF production and outreach grant, premiered at the renowned Sundance Film Festival and has won best short documentary awards at three film festivals. Mr. Armstrong, a colorful and courageous activist of the Civil Rights era casts his vote, celebrates Obama's victory and proudly unfurls the American flag he carried across the Edmund Pettus Bridge as he is inducted into the Foot Soldiers Hall of Fame. Mr. Armstrong links the magnitude of the present paradigm shift with challenges he faced in the past: from his sons' integration into an all white school to the Bloody Sunday march for voting rights.

BFF also provided production funding for ***Better This World***, a dramatic story of idealism, loyalty, crime and betrayal, the film goes to the heart of the War on Terror and its impact on civil liberties and political dissent in post-9/11 America. It went on to win the award for best documentary at the San Francisco International Film Festival and was broadcast on the public television series *POV*.

A Different Color, a grant winner in the student category, profiles Edythe Boone, a Berkeley muralist, teacher and visionary whose murals grace the buildings and streets of the San Francisco Bay Area, including the San Francisco Women's Building.

Tickets for the 2011 Berkeley FILM Foundation fundraising event, which will be held at the Zaentz Media Center, 2600 Tenth Street, Berkeley, on Thursday, November 10, 2011, from 6-8p, are \$100 and may be reserved and purchased at <http://berkeleyfilmfoundation2011.eventbrite.com>.

Press contact is Abby Ginzberg, President of the Board of the Berkeley FILM Foundation, who may be reached at 510-367-3499.

Besides the three founding partners, sponsors who continue to support the annual fundraisers include Meyer Sound Laboratories, The Banbury Fund and Shartsis Friese LLP. Inquiries on sponsorship opportunities are directed to David Bergad, Vice President, BFF Board, at davidb@zaentz.com.

Additional information on the Berkeley FILM Foundation may be found at <http://visitberkeley.com/film-office/berkeley-film-foundation> and at <http://www.facebook.com/BerkeleyFilmFoundation>.

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