

# WIFV NEWS

## January 2017 Members in the News

Edited by Flo Dwek

Featuring Bonnie Nelson Schwartz, John Wetmore, Rosemary Reed, Jon Gann, Docs In Progress, Tess Wald, Ginny Durrin, Robin Smith, Catherine Wyler, Joe Fab, Call for Members in the News Articles, Call for Awards Info!

### From the Historic Green Book to Today's Black Lives Matter



What began as a play about an unknown travel guide for African-Americans, (the Green Book),

produced 6 years ago at the historic Lincoln Theatre in Washington, DC, by **Bonnie Nelson Schwartz**, has evolved into a powerful and timely multi-platform film project -TRAVELING WHILE BLACK.

On October 5, Schwartz and fellow producer, Academy- Award winning director Roger Ross Williams premiered TRAVELING WHILE BLACK for a sold-out audience at the 2016 New York Film Festival.

TRAVELING WHILE BLACK is a multi-platform project with a suite of experiences including films, virtual reality, live storytelling experiences, and a traveling museum exhibit, designed for the new National Museum of African American History and Culture.

### WIFV/TIVA Holiday Party - January 27



Scenes from the 2016 WIFV/TIVA Holiday Party



#### Revive your spirits this Friday

Harman Center for the Arts, 610 F St, NW

\$35 Members / \$25 Students / \$50

Public

Price increase on January 24

**Register TODAY!**

### Wetmore Celebrates 20th Anniversary of PERILS FOR PEDESTRIANS

**John Z. Wetmore**, the host and producer of the monthly public affairs series, PERILS FOR PEDESTRIANS, is

TRAVELING WHILE BLACK is supported by the Southern Poverty Law Center, ITVS, National Endowment for the Humanities, Sundance Institute's New Frontier Program, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Tribeca Film Institute, and the *New York Times*.

## Reed and Gann Receive TIVA Peer Awards

Kudos to long time WIFV and TIVA members **Rosemary Reed** and **Jon Gann**, recipients of the 2016 TIVA Peer Awards.

### Rosemary Reed

received TIVA's 2016 Steve Wallace Community Service Award, which recognizes an individual whose professional work is noted for outstanding philanthropy and charity; a track record of giving back to the community through their pro bono leadership and work; a distinguished work ethic, and a generosity of spirit for and within the region's media production community. Rosemary and Double R Productions have offered pro bono services and videos to small, deserving non-profits produced by the Double Rintern team each spring, summer and fall session. Rosemary believes "it's all about giving back to the community in which you live and do business in, the greater Washington, DC metro area." This year, Double R is celebrating 30 years of successful full service communications solutions and video production. **You can view an excerpt from Rosemary's acceptance speech and call to action at the event here.** *Learn more about Double R Productions [here](#).*



proud to announce the show's 20th anniversary in 2016 with the completion of Episode 240.



John interviews advocates, planners, and public officials about problems confronting pedestrians in all too many communities, and spotlights solutions to those problems from folks throughout the US and around the world. The program also looks at bicyclists, transit, and broader issues related to urban design and sustainable transportation. During the past 20 years, the series has included over 1,000 interviews shot on location in all 50 states and 20 countries. John says the Internet has been vital to locating individuals in those countries who could talk on camera in English about pedestrians. The series airs on 150 public, educational, and government access cable stations around the country. It is also archived on YouTube, where half the views come from outside the U.S. *To learn more, contact John at [john@pedestrians.org](mailto:john@pedestrians.org).*



John Z Wetmore (left) interviews Alex Brazier about the "Harbour Loop" trail next to Hong Kong Harbour.

## New Address & New Funding for Docs in Progress!



**Erica Ginsberg** and her crew at Docs in Progress have moved! After their building was sold to a developer, Docs In Progress was forced to move from its iconic "Documentary House" in downtown Silver Spring. They are now at a new space at 801 Wayne Avenue, Suite G-100 (corner of Wayne Avenue and



**Jon Gann** received TIVA's 2016 Community Partner Award. Jon is well known as the founder of DC Shorts, a non-profit organization championing short filmmaking, and the creator of the DC

Shorts Film Festival, one of the country's premier short film showcases. He is also Director of Programming for the Film Festival Alliance, the first non-profit organization formed to professionalize festival organizers. In other efforts, Jon leads short film programming for the SF Indie Fest and the Port Townsend Film Festivals, and serves as Technical Director for the Key West Film Festival. "I am honored," he says, "to be recognized for my work to bring the region's film community together through film festivals, educational programs, and simple face-to-face meetings with and between film organizations. I love this community, and I am dedicated to unifying our industry, while expanding our reputation." Through his Reel Plan consulting firm, Jon has bridged the communication gap between competing film festivals, so all can share film information, sponsor strategies and filmmaker data. He also works with dozens of filmmakers on festival strategies and niche marketing. *To learn more, contact Jon [here](#).*

### Wald Delivers Rally for 2000!

Tess Wald Productions (TWP) provided staging support and stage management for recently



Chris Van Hollen and Tess Wald

elected Maryland Senator Chris Van Hollen! Over 2,000 people attended

(Cedar Lane) in downtown Silver Spring - still within walking distance from the Metro and parking. Erica says programs in the new space will start up by the end of January, including classes, workshops, and the February Documentary Roundtable held in partnership with WIFV. The organization is thankful to many colleagues from the WIFV community who responded to a special call for donations to help support costs associated with the unanticipated move.

**More good news:** Docs In Progress recently received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts to support two initiatives. One is the deepening of their filmmaker services programs, including Residency, Peer Pitch, and Fellowship. This year's Docs In Progress Fellows will not only come together monthly for eight months to work through the ups and downs of their documentary projects, but will also get passes and accommodations to attend the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival in North Carolina. NEA funding will also support a new initiative, Docs In The City, which will bring top documentary filmmakers to Washington, DC to present iconic, thematic works while also providing feedback to an emerging documentary filmmaker on a work-in-progress on a similar theme.

*To find out more about these and other happenings at Docs In Progress, visit [docsinprogress.org](http://docsinprogress.org)*

the **Rally** around the defense of Affordable Care Act at Bowie State University. There were so many more people than expected that three different stages were needed to accommodate the crowd. These types of engaging events are an example of the core of TWP's 30+ years of event planning and management. TWP provides AV equipment, staging, signage, onsite supervision and stage management. Having worked POTUS events for all of the presidents in the last three decades, they keenly understand security protocol and safety concerns, especially in the recent political environment. For more info, visit their site [here](#).

## Salute to our Foremothers - The WIFV Q&A



For the next several months, we will be featuring interviews with the women who founded and nurtured Women in Film & Video from the beginning to today! It is quite astounding for a professional development nonprofit to celebrate a 40th Anniversary (ours will begin in 2019) and even more astounding to have so many of its founders and leaders remaining actively involved with the organization. We are honored by their support and nourished by their expertise and enthusiasm. Thanks to **Flo Dwek** for this great idea!

### Ginny Durrin

#### **How long have you been a WIFV member, and why did you join WIFV, all those years ago?**

Back in 1979, I was doing well as a young producer/director and mother of two, but something was lacking, so I got in touch with the few women I knew in the business to have a meeting. Before this, there was no formal organization. Molly Gregory, of WIF LA, was in town, so I invited her to talk to us about her new book, *The Business of Film*. This first meeting in my living room was a great success; it filled a need that we all had, to get to know one another and gather strength and friendship. It was like a flash of lightning went off, and we never looked back after that first meeting. WIFV just grew and GREW. I was the founding president for that first year!

#### **What were you doing then, and what are you doing today?**

I was a producer/director back then, and I still am, adding the role of distributor to the mix for a number of years. Today, I try to do three things -- frequently see my four granddaughters in LA, travel, and complete my independent film in post production, BOMBS IN OUR BACKYARD.

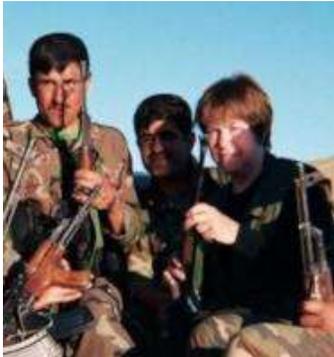
#### **What are some of the most beneficial things about your membership with WIFV?**

You know, I could spend hours singing the praises and benefits of WIFV -- colleagues and networking, warmth, friendship, power, knowledge, ongoing education, success, self esteem, equality. It's all that -- and much, much more.

#### **What advice do you have for emerging filmmakers?**

Believe in yourself and your projects or job aspirations, and always be realistic about supporting yourself. Have goals, short- and long-term, set deadlines, go out and meet with lots of people, and

make use of the benefits and resources that WIFV offers. And listen to what people say. Most of all, sustain your belief in yourself and the film you want to make. Our society needs independent voices, unafraid, to help create social change.



Durrin with Kurdish soldiers, 1982

### **Anything else you would care to share?**

In 1982 I was one of several producers hired for a PBS series, AVOIDING ARMAGEDDON, funded by Ted Turner Pictures. My show was on chemical and biological weapons. I decided I wanted to film the story of how Saddam Hussein bombed the Kurds with chemicals, mainly sarin gas. In order to do this, with no passport, I snuck into Kurdistan (northern Iraq) from Syria, crossing the Tigris River in a wooden outboard boat, and was met by the Kurds on the other side. My production bosses did not want me to go, but I was determined. I was guarded by many armed Kurdish soldiers along the way, and I got the story in Halabja, one of the villages that was gassed. Incredibly, this was just before the US invaded Iraq to topple Saddam.

## **Robin Smith**

### **How long have you been a WIFV member, and why did you join WIFV, all those years ago?**

I don't remember exactly WHEN I joined WIFV-DC, but it was sometime between my moving to Washington from New York City (1985) and the founding of Video/Action (1990). But I do remember exactly WHY I joined - to become a part of what was - and still is - a vibrant community of independent filmmakers and strong willed women!



### **What were you doing then, and what are you doing today?**

The late 80's was a time of great transition for me. Before coming to Washington, I had been a network news producer on what was then a brand new show: CBS News Sunday Morning with Charles Kuralt. I had joined CBS News in 1978 after getting my Masters in Documentary Filmmaking at Boston University. Working on a network news magazine show taught me that my desire to create "documentaries" could be satisfied by producing 8- to 12-minute stories featuring real people and real events for a television audience. And there was no fundraising involved; CBS News paid for everything - the crews, editors, and my time! All I had to do is come up with great ideas!

There was no such "financial certainty" when I left the network and stepped into the world of independent producing. My intention was to create a nonprofit company and produce "Sunday Morning style" stories for nonprofits that were doing incredible work, but did not know how to tell their own stories. Exactly how I was going to do that was a mystery in 1990! But thanks to a determination to make it work, Video/Action is thriving today. Many young, emerging filmmakers have come and gone, and together we have produced over 550 remarkable videos (including a handful of documentaries) featuring real people and real stories.

### **What are some of the most beneficial things about your membership with WIFV?**

Being a member of WIFV was a lifesaver for me. The professional development opportunities were abundant. I was able to learn from independent filmmaker colleagues on similar journeys how to build a sustainable company. And I never felt "alone." Joining the WIFV Board was a catalyst for me to become fully immersed in all that WIFV had to offer. Serving as President (1995-1996) was a huge commitment - and extraordinarily challenging to find the time to do everything, and do it well. But it was also the moment in time when friendships forged in the filmmaking community solidified. And the women who gave their all for that Board continue to be a part of my professional life today.

### **What advice do you have for emerging filmmakers?**

Be open minded about what your career path will look like and embrace interesting opportunities that present themselves. I honestly thought my taking a television job with the network was a temporary diversion from what I was destined to do: make long format films that would be shown in theaters. And it turns out that the foray into television news revealed what it was about the art of filmmaking that intrigued me. It wasn't the finished products. It was the process of engaging with challenging issues, digging deep, and telling stories with authentic voices.

### **Anything else you would like to share?**

My father had been a career military officer. In 1969 (when I was an undergraduate in college) his plane was shot down over North Vietnam and he was declared Missing in Action. For years, my family struggled with the emotional state of limbo his disappearance caused. I decided to confront these feelings by making a documentary film as my thesis project at Boston University. The process was grueling and liberating, all at the same time. And the film - a story that I never imagined would be of interest to anyone else - opened many doors for me. It was the reason CBS News hired me to be a "summer researcher." By "digging deep" and using the act of filmmaking as the shovel, I realized the gift I had given myself was a gift I could share by helping other people with experiences locked in their hearts to tell their own stories.

Many years passed before I learned what actually happened to my father's plane in 1969. And in 1995, when an opportunity to go to Vietnam and visit my father's crash site presented itself, I realized being a filmmaker provided me with the armor I needed to make that trip. The act of "telling the story" protected the daughter who longed to know the truth.

My first film was called HE'S ONLY MISSING. The sequel - a story that I produced for CBS News in 1995 - was called LETTING GO. A couple of years ago WIFV hosted a screening event in which the two films were shown back-to-back for the very first time. Sharing this work with friends and professional colleagues is an evening I will never forget - one of the many benefits derived from membership in our amazing organization!

## **Catherine Wyler**



### **How long have you been a WIFV member, and why did you join WIFV, all those years ago?**

I was so thrilled to learn from Ginny Durrin that there was an organization for women filmmakers in DC, and joined immediately in 1998. Having spent much of my career at organizations like the National Endowment for the Arts, PBS and Columbia Pictures, I was finding the life of an independent producer a bit lonely, and WIFV came to my rescue.

### **What were you doing then, and what are you doing today?**

At the time, I was between projects, having produced a feature film, MEMPHIS BELLE, which was released in 1990, and then spent about three years thinking I was now a feature producer, setting up a couple of feature projects at studios and having them go nowhere.

I was living with my mother in LA, while my husband was in DC, and when he asked one night on the phone, "Remind me why we are living like this?", I thought it was time to "fuggedaboutit" and go home. About the time I joined WIFV, I began to prepare a doc on the life of then Pope John Paul II. Judy Hallet soon joined me to co-produce and direct, and WITNESS TO HOPE ultimately became public TV's most successful fundraising program of 2001.

Currently, I'm working on a documentary about the Dalai Lama's first initiation (Kalachakra) outside of Tibet or India, which took place in Madison, Wisconsin in 1981. It is the story of the coming of Tibetan Buddhism to the West, and how each changed the other. Another project is a series on contemporary motion picture directors and the classic directors they learned from and stole from. It is headlined by writer/director Alexander Payne.

**What are some of the most beneficial things about your membership with WIFV?**

Among all the good things to choose from, I would say: solidarity, lots of useful information, and a good measure of fun!

**What advice do you have for emerging filmmakers?**

The most important qualities for emerging filmmakers, in my view, are an understanding of their craft, a boundless tenacity and never-ending optimism.

**Anything else you would care to share?**

One of my favorite recollections, which demonstrates the intrepid spirit that filmmakers need, came during the making of WITNESS TO HOPE. Judy "ready-for-anything" Hallet packed a big Nazi flag in her suitcase and we flew off to John Paul's childhood home -- Krakow, Poland -- where there is a lot of sensitivity to their collaborationist past. Early one morning, we shot a re-creation of a soldier in a Nazi uniform standing guard before a stone tower. When the shot was ready, Judy raced up the tower and hung out the flag. We grabbed the shot and disappeared within minutes!

## Q&A with Joe Fab - NOT THE LAST BUTTERFLY

Last summer, we reported on **Joe Fab's** newest documentary, NOT THE LAST BUTTERFLY, which had just had a successful sneak preview in Los Angeles. This month, we checked in with Joe to see what he's been up to since then.



**Your doc is about "The Butterfly Project." How does the film tell its story?**

The Butterfly Project's mission is to paint and display 1.5 million ceramic butterflies, honoring and remembering the children murdered in the Holocaust, and to foster education and awareness about the dangers of hate and bigotry, encouraging us all to stand up against injustice and create a more compassionate and peaceful world. The film explains the inspiration for the project at a school in San Diego, where it was started in 2006 by educator Jan Landau and artist Cheryl Rattner Price, who executive produced the film and co-directed it with me. It shows how the project has spread so far - there are installations all across the US and in Australia, Israel, Peru, Poland, Mexico, and other countries.

Both the project itself and the story featured in the film about a Holocaust survivor remind us of how powerful combining art and education can be. That survivor, like a few other fortunate children, was able to maintain her emotional and mental well being while enduring years in a Nazi concentration camp, thanks to a talented teacher who taught the children to express themselves through painting and drawing. But there are still well over a million butterflies to go, so the film is also a call to action, an invitation to everyone to join in.

**How is this doc different from the making of your very successful film, PAPER CLIPS?**

For PAPER CLIPS, I was involved from the very beginning, gaining the access to and trust of the teachers, children and community in the small town of Whitwell, Tennessee. With my co-director, **Elliot Berlin**, I produced and directed it for over two years and then directed the post-production.

For NOT THE LAST BUTTERFLY, I was invited in by first-time filmmaker Cheryl Rattner Price after she had already been filming for more than half a decade! Cheryl had scores of hours of footage in many different formats and of varying quality. She realized that she was in pretty deep and wasn't sure how to pull a film out of all that material. I came in and "wrestled the story to the floor," as I like to say, and helped her create a structure and shape for the film. I also conducted some key interviews and directed the shoot in the Terezin concentration camp in the Czech Republic with Ela Weissberger, the survivor I mentioned. Then I managed much of the post production, including the creation of the score by DC composer [Charlie Barnett](#) - and the audio mix at Baltimore's [Studio Unknown](#).

#### **When and where can we see the film?**

I'm so glad you asked me that! At the moment, we're awaiting word about a screening here in DC, probably in the spring. [Our New York City premiere is coming up on January 24](#). We had a very successful event at the Virginia Film Festival in November, and we have upcoming screenings in Atlanta, San Diego, and Palm Beach, with more dates being set as we speak.

This film is a little bit different to book than some others because a butterfly painting opportunity and the creation of a local installation displaying the butterflies make the whole experience much more meaningful than simply watching the film. Furthermore, when one or more Holocaust survivors can be present and participate, the event takes on even more impact. (Festivals and other hosting groups seem to agree, so booking this film involves some additional -- and very worthwhile -- logistics. You can see some examples of just a few installations [here](#).)

We're especially excited to have been invited by the US Ambassador to Latvia to tour that country showing the film, speaking with audiences there, and helping create a permanent butterfly display there. Latvia! Didn't see that one coming! But Latvia's history as it relates to the Holocaust and also its present-day societal divisions make it a perfect place to share The Butterfly Project.

*Coming soon: a final installment on this project, in which Joe will report on the screenings in Latvia and talk about the art and science of being a documentary film consultant.*



Whenever you shop with Amazon Smile, Amazon will donate a percentage of every purchase to WIFV - at no extra charge to you! [Click here to set your Amazon account to automatically donate to WIFV](#), and be sure to type in [smile.amazon.com](#) whenever you make an Amazon purchase. This is an easy way to show your support and make a difference for women in film, TV and digital media.

**Call for WIFV Members in the News Articles**

What's the best way to brag about your accomplishments? With a Members in the News article, of course. Not only can you include a photo and your website, it is archived at [wifv.org](http://wifv.org) and adds to your SEO. Submit your paragraph, jpg photo, and any links to [director@wifv.org](mailto:director@wifv.org) by the 5th of the month.

## Call for Award Info

If you have won an award, screened at a film festival, or received a major grant, please let me know so we can share your success. Send the info to [director@wifv.org](mailto:director@wifv.org)

## Thank you!

WIFV is honored to be recognized again as a Top-Rated organization by Great Nonprofits. Less than 1% of eligible nonprofits received this distinction. Because of the reviews WIFV has received, we've been a Top-Rated nonprofit since 2012. **Your review makes a difference!**



We value your your reviews throughout the year. Please tell Great Nonprofits about an experience you've had at a WIFV program, an interaction you've had with a speaker or fellow member, or just what WIFV means to you. [Click here to go straight to the WIFV page on their site.](#)

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### About WIFV

WIFV supports women in the industry by promoting equal opportunities, encouraging professional development, serving as an information network, and educating the public about women's creative and technical achievements.



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