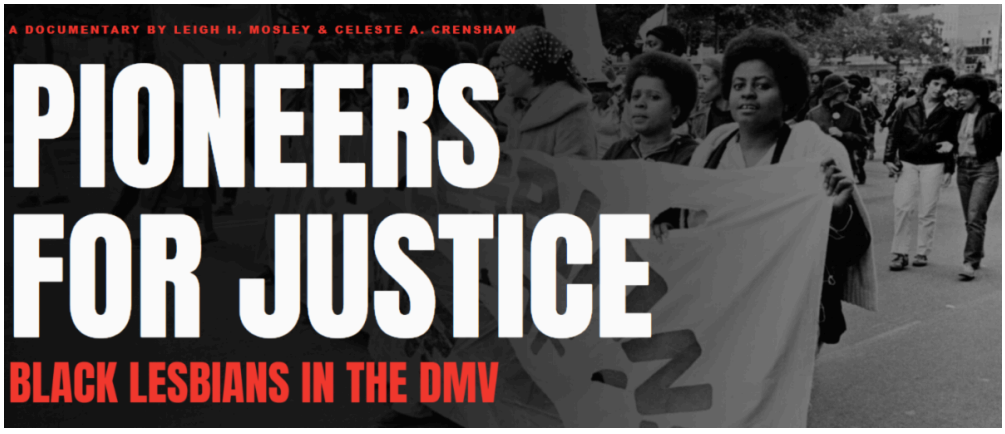
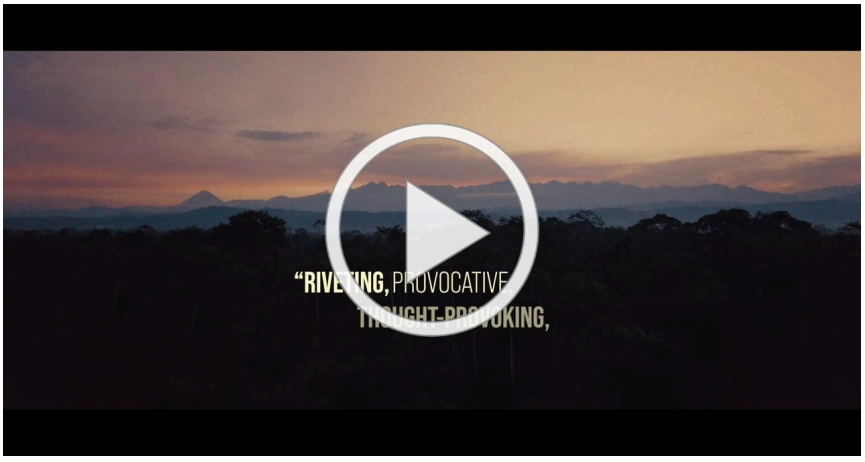
WIFV NEWS

WIFV People in the News - November 2026

37 Members Making News - Scroll to Find Out Who!



PIONEERS FOR JUSTICE: Black Lesbians in the DMV, directed/produced by **Leigh H. Mosley** and Celeste A. Crenshaw, honors Black lesbian elders whose activism, creativity, and community-building helped shape Washington, D.C. and the surrounding region for more than four decades. Through intimate interviews, personal stories, archival photographs, and historical reflection, the film documents women who created spaces, built institutions, and advanced social justice despite racism, sexism, homophobia, and invisibility. More than a celebration of resilience and legacy, the film is an act of preservation—ensuring that the stories of women who helped make history are not lost. **Learn more here**.



WINNER: Best Feature Doc, Austin Film Festival 2026

Strange Ashes: The Untold Story of Elisabeth Elliot

Directed by Laura Waters Hinson

After her husband's murder in the Ecuadorian jungle, a missionary widow wrestles with the true costs of conviction as she transforms into one of the 20th century's most popular and polarizing faith figures.

"Riveting, provocative, thought-provoking, complicated and more." - Ken Burns

Congratulate Laura here!

Frederick Gathers, Films, and Celebrates



October WIFV Frederick Coffee L to R around table: Nathan Akula, Tod Hopkins, Jessica Mendel, Tara Zabriskie, Todd Gardner, Rhonda McLaughlin, Ben Holland, Khadeeja Sesay, Jean Rosolino

Team WIFV Frederick Coffee created a short film, "Gigi's Lessons," for Frederick's SilverVox 72 Hour Film Festival October 1-4. All films were screened on Friday, October 16 at the Weinberg Theatre in Frederick. Our team, made up of members of Women in Film and Video, was a predominantly female team.

Written by **Mere Walton** (in a "mere" 75 minutes, I might add!) and directed by (first-time director!) **Vickie Warehime**, the film was produced by our fearless leader, **Jessica Mendel**. Caitlin Wallace, our Director of Photography, made us look good and **Tara Roberts Zabriskie** served again as our amazing editor. **Jean Rosolino** played Gigi and **Sisi Saunders** (new to WIFV and we're thrilled to have her!) was Veda. Our Team was rounded out with newcomer **Thomas McMiller** as 2nd Camera; **Ramsey Telhami** as Key Grip; **Tod Hopkins** as Grip/Whatever was Needed; **Ayana Ware** as Sound Recordist; **Nathan Akula,** PA; and **Dianela Urdaneta** as Script Supervisor. **Malyn Pilard** kept us well fed all weekend. The post production crew, in addition to Tara, included **Todd Gardner**, Title Design & Animation; Ramsey as Colorist; and **Matt Hoffman**, Audio Post Production.

And a photo of the 72 Hour team is below
Squatting in front: Caitlin Wallace & Ramsey Telhami
Standing: Vickie Warehime, Jessica Mendel, Malyn Pilard, Thomas McMiller, Jean Rosolino, Ayana Ware, Tara Roberts Zabriskie, Tod Hopkins
Rear, partially blocked: Sisi Saunders & Nathan Akula
Not pictured: Mere Walton, Dianela Urdaneta, Todd Gardner, Matt Hoffman



Subversive Comedy on YouTube

John Aaron is proud to announce the launch of his political satire videos on **YouTube @subversivecomedy**.

"Comedy is cruel. Cruelty IS Trump's plan. MadKIng47 can dish it out, but he can't take it. I'm just returning the favor."





Bi-Coastal Wins for BAKING SODA

On Sunday, October 18, the Manhattanhenge Film Festival, held in Los Angeles, presented its annual awards. We were thrilled to learn that BAKING SODA written by **Natalie Caroline** and produced by **Wonder Pictures** had been nominated in the Drama Short Films category.

Unfortunately, **sheri ratick stroud** was unable to attend the event. Fortunately, Melissa knew someone who lived in the area! We contacted **Laurisha Yniguez** and asked if she would represent Wonder Pictures at the ceremony. She graciously agreed and attended on our behalf.

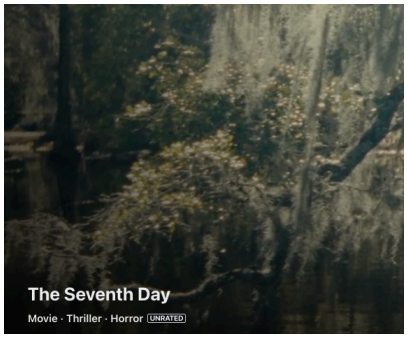
When the awards were presented for the Drama Short Films category, BAKING SODA did not win. So, Laurisha settled back into her seat, ready to enjoy the rest of the ceremony.

Then came the final category of the evening: the Jury Award, the festival's major award. And the winner was...BAKING SODA!! WOW! What a thrill!

Laurisha accepted the award on behalf of Wonder Pictures and posed for pictures to capture this exciting moment. See right above! That's sheri in the photo on the left with the Best Screenplay Award for BAKING SODA from the Catskills International Film Fest.

Wonder Pictures extends its heartfelt thanks to Laurisha for representing us at the festival. We are so grateful that she was there to share in this special moment. And, of course, congratulations to the entire cast and crew of baking soda! This recognition belongs to all of you. Thank you for helping make it happen!

McDonnell Lenses THE SEVENTH DAY



Matthew McDonnell was the Director of Photography for THE SEVENTH DAY currently streaming on **Apple TV** and **Amazon Prime**. A group of travel journalists visit the quiet town of Willow Ridge to write a story about the Delaney family, known for their famous blueberry pies. But what they discover during their stay will change everything.

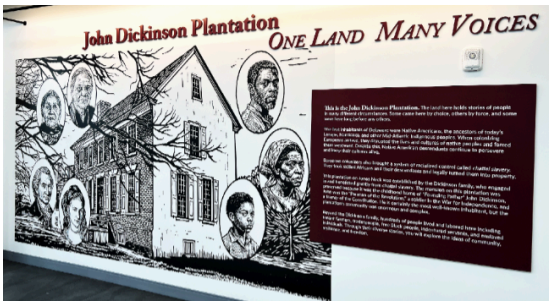


Reed Releases Film about Heir Rights

MAINLAND RIGHTFUL HEIR directed by **Barbara Reed** explores the battle of heirs property through expert testimony, real experiences and best practices on how to sustain and preserve land ownership. The documentary also explores the complexity of the multi-layered reasons for the loss of Black American ancestral lands in the southern United States, with a focus on the Gullah-Geechee descendants of St. Helena and Sapelo Island to ensure their rights and land are preserved and protected. Watch the trailer by clicking on the photo above.

If you organization would like to coordinate a special screening and talk back session contact Barbara at **reedportraits.stories@gmail.com**

One Land, Many Voices Opens at the John Dickinson Plantation



Tod Hopkins recently completed audiovisuals for a new exhibition at the John Dickinson Plantation Museum in Dover, Delaware. *One Land, Many Voices* tells the complex story of the numerous individuals who contributed to the history of the plantation and surrounding communities: Indigenous peoples, free and enslaved Black men, women, and children, tenant farmers, indentured servants, and the Dickinson family.

The 5,000 square foot exhibition includes multiple interactive applications, videos, and audio programs including **Jean Rosolino** reading a selection of “Mary Dickinson’s Poetry. An interactive video wall orients visitors to the plantation grounds. “Violet Brown” combines animation and live action for a biographical sketch of one woman’s journey from enslaved birth to manumission and freedom. “Lenape Voices” features Delaware tribe members telling traditional stories in Lenape, accompanied by an environmental ambience capturing the sounds of pre-colonial Delaware.

The brand-new Visitor Center Museum opened to the public on October 11. The museum, historic site, and mansion tours are all free. **Learn more here**.



DOUEN Premiere at AFI Silver

Alyscia Cunningham held a community screening of her debut feature, DOUEN, on November 1 at AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center in Silver Spring, Maryland. The horror film draws on Trinidad and Tobago folklore, and the evening celebrated Caribbean culture with live steelpan, Moko Jumbies, and dancers. Ayesha Wharton of the Embassy of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago opened the screening with remarks on keeping oral storytelling traditions alive. **Read more about the premiere here**.

Cunningham is raising funds through WIFV to bring DOUEN to more theaters and communities. **Make your donation here**. **Read blog post by Ashley Worley here**.



CONTROL LINE at Aesthetica

Jainaba Seckan announces that her short film, CONTROL LINE, will premiere in November at the Aesthetica Short Film Festival, a BAFTA-qualifying festival, in York, England.

The film is about how a determined Black woman in her mid-30s navigates the emotional and physical challenges of conception, loss, and motherhood, all within the intimate confines of her bathroom. **Follow the story here**

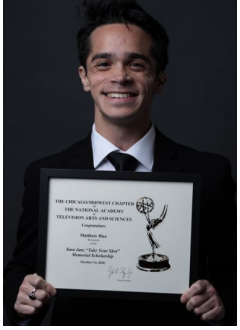
I AM DC at Poetry in Motion NYC

I AM DC is a short poetry film created for the Poetry in Motion NYC project, which pairs poets with filmmakers. **Harper Carter** collaborated with acclaimed poet Regie Cabico to bring his poem to life, celebrating the spirit, history, and cultural identity of Washington, DC. **You can watch the film here**.

"I attempted to capture the tension between two strong elements of DC: the political DC and the diverse communities who call it home. Before the shoot, I received very helpful advice from fellow WIF members**.** I am so grateful that I was able to approach the shoot feeling guided and supported."

Hua Receives NATAS Scholarship

Matthew Hua received the Sara Janz "Take Your Shot" Memorial Scholarship from the Chicago/Midwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences at the Chicago/Midwest Chapter EMMYS on October 24th, 2026. **You can watch the scholarship tribute to Matt here**.





Hains Point and Checkers

Peggy Fleming's husband Pat plays at the Hains Point golf course and he suggested she share this video of the Checkers men annual picnic she filmed in 2010. Their grandson edited it this past summer.

In 2010 Fleming was filming the Capital Pool checker players at their club at 9th and S and was invited to film their annual picnic at Hains Point. The video is the afternoon picnic of the men with their families and friends, on August 21, at the far end of Hains Point.

Trump's plan to replace the public, National Park Service, East Potomac Park Golf Course, with a much fancier (and more pricey) course is currently in the news. Hains Point is more than the golf course. It is also a recreational and relaxation venue for the city - picnics and playgrounds, biking and fishing, setting up a chair to relax. Under Trump's plan all of these uses will be eliminated.

Destroying Hains Point as it is now is not just about the golf course. Bad as that is, it attacks a 100 years old important cultural component of DC.

Murphy interviewed on Democracy Now

Democracy Now featured co-director and WIFV member **Catherine Murphy** speaking about her new doc, The Reading The World/Lendo o Mundo. This archival documentary focuses on Paulo Freire's early work and his team's literacy program in Angicos, Brazil; the political ramifications of that work; and the enduring global impact of this legendary

Brazilian educator's life. Mara Wollong, NYWIF, is one of the editors. Former WIFV board member **Talaya Grimes** is the AP. Watch the interview below.





BAMAKO CHIC Wins

Grand Jury Prize for Best Short Documentary at the United Nations Association Film Festival, Palo Alto, CA.

BAMAKO CHIC: Threads of Power, Color and Culture directed by **Maureen Gosling** follows the stories of self-empowered African women, who create beauty, exhibit a strong cultural identity and are skilled innovators of dyeing cloth by hand, in Bamako, Mali. Through the intimate lives of three Malian cloth dyers, BAMAKO CHIC reveals the unsung work and artistry of women in one of the poorest nations in the world, where unemployment is 80% and political turmoil has destabilized the country since the coup of 2011. Navigating the perils of economic, health and food insecurity, the dyers have used their artistic gifts and creative ingenuity to carve out an economic niche for themselves and other Malian women.

Pictured L-R: Maureen Gosling, festival guest, Maxine Downs

Local Filmmakers Support the Next Gen



AU MFA capstone students had the privilege of presenting their thesis pitches to several esteemed local media makers this October. In attendance were WIFV Executive Director **Melissa Houghton**, **No Weapon Productions** President **Connie St. John**, film producer/consultant **Mark Ricche** of **CrypticPictures.com**. and theatre producer **Michel D'Anna** with Journeymen Productions LLC. Special thanks to Professor **Laura Waters Hinson** for connecting students with the local creative community and helping support the next generation of filmmakers.

Front Row (L-R): Dennis Serrano, Jacob Clark, Mark Ricche, Michel D'Anna Melissa Houghton, Laura Hinson, Tanya Ruiz La Force

Back Row (L-R): Eric Chengwon Jon, Julia Hernandez, Krys Palacios, Madison Minges, Anastasiia Polyakov, Danielle Dianne Kiminyo

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THE MAMA SHERPAS Now on YouTube

For the first time, the acclaimed 2015 documentary THE MAMA SHERPAS is available to the public to watch and share for FREE on YouTube! **Watch here**

This is more than the release of a film. It is an opportunity to bring an important conversation about women's health, maternal healthcare, midwifery, and informed birth choices to audiences everywhere.

Directed and produced by **Brigid Maher**, with producers Kari Barber and Alex Perrault, and executive producers Ricki Lake and Abby Epstein (*The Business of Being Born*), THE MAMA SHERPAS takes viewers inside hospitals across the United States to explore the power and potential of collaborative maternity care. Through the experiences of mothers, nurse-midwives, and physicians, the documentary examines how collaboration can transform maternity care and expand the options available to women and families.

These are conversations that matter. And they need to reach more people.

Perez Published and Produced



Jackie Perez celebrated the release of her short story "Nap" in the limited edition hardcover print of *KEYS TO THE KINGDOM*, an anthology in the spirit of Stephen King's Dollar Babies, written by Dollar Baby filmmakers. She spoke at this year's KingCon in Atlantic City, NJ about her journey as an author and adapting/directing **BEACHWORLD (2018)**, one of six Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Shorts Branch selects for their 2025 Dollar Baby retrospective. Watch it below.



Thanks to the WIFV Supporters





































Thank You!

We appreciate everyone who took time to write a testimonial about WIFV at Great Nonprofits. We remain a Top-Rated nonprofit on their site consulted by donors and volunteers. You don't need to wait for a call for testimonials, **you can add your insights anytime throughout the year here**.

News Deadline

The deadline to submit your information for the monthly Members in the News e-publication is the 10th of the month. Send your article (100 words or so) and a jpg-format photograph or link to your video project to **director@wifv.org**.

About WIFV

Women in Film & Video (WIFV) provides educational and networking opportunities for screen-based media makers, celebrates women's creative and technical achievements in media, and advocates for parity both in front of and behind the camera to ensure that all voices can be heard. We welcome all genres, genders, and experience levels.





Women in Film & Video | 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE | Washington, DC 20003 US

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