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FESTIVAL COMPETITION AND AUDIENCE AWARDS ANNOUNCED

At the annual black-tie Filmmaker Tribute Dinner presentation of the Regal Entertainment Group's Achievement Awards – this year's Lifetime Achievement Award to Ms. Leslie Caron and Career Achievement to Rutger Hauer - at the Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota on Saturday evening, February 5, the Competition and Audience Awards for the 7th Annual Sarasota Film Festival were announced.

The evening was introduced by Festival Executive Director, Jody Kielbasa and Madam of Ceremonies, Lainie Kazan (who earlier in the week was the honoree guest at the Festival's annual "Luncheon at the Banyans") who presented the Audience Awards and Scholarships. Festival programmer Tom Hall announced the Jury Competition Awards, and Festival Chairman, Dr. John Welch announced the Young Filmmaker and Scholarship Awards. Following the awards were clip montages of Hauer and Caron's wonderful careers and rousing ovations for the honorees.

Among this year's Competition Jury members are: Independent Visions - Seymour Wishman, President, First Run Features; Vanessa Parise, Writer/ Director/ Actor; Terry Porter, Video Renaissance. Best Narrative Feature - John Anderson, Chief Film Critic, Newsday; Linda Lee, Editor In Chief, InsideOut Magazine; Stuart Kaminsky, Screenwriter; Best Documentary - Jonathan Caouette, Filmmaker (Tarnation); Tom Quinn, Director of Acquisitions, Magnolia Pictures; Lynn Corcoran, Documentarian.

Each of the competition awards carry a \$5,000 cash prize for the filmmaker.

The 2005 Narrative Feature Competition Award was presented to Danny Boyle's ***Millions*** (UK).

The 2005 Documentary Feature Competition Award was presented to Stephen Vittoria's ***One Bright Shining Moment: The Forgotten Summer of George McGovern***.

The 2005 Independent Visions Competition Award was a tie between Rob Stefaniuk's ***Phil The Alien*** and James Westby's ***Film Geek***.

The Emerging Filmmaker Award was presented to director Jason White for his short film ***Spin*** created at the University of Southern California.

The Young Filmmakers Showcase presented the Best Director Award to Richard Bertelsen for his film ***Creed*** He will receive \$1000 Scholarship courtesy of The Newgate School.

The Best Short Family Film Award was presented to director **Art Curry** for his film ***Pen Pals***, and chosen by 6 young local cineastes: Ashley Bustetter, Dylan de Fouw, Michael Everett, Rosa Flores-Soto, Genesis Soto, Torus Washington who are currently enrolled in the Big Brothers, Big Sisters program.

The Sarasota Film Festival Scholarship recipients were **Asa Donat** of Florida State University with the **Gerd-Petrick Scholarship** and **Victor De Oliveira** of Manatee Community College with the **Dr. John Welch Scholarship**.

Special recognition goes to winners of our Audience Favorite Awards for Best Narrative Feature, Best Documentary, Excellence in World Cinema, and Best Short Film, all presented courtesy of the Amicus

Foundation and the Mark P. Famiglio Foundation. Each category carries a \$1,000 cash prize presented to the filmmaker.

The 2005 Sarasota Film Festival Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature was presented to director Dave McKean's ***MirrorMask***.

The 2005 Sarasota Film Festival Audience Award for Best Documentary was presented to director Rebecca Dreyfus's ***Stolen***.

The 2005 Sarasota Film Festival Audience Award for Excellence in World Cinema was presented to director Prachya Pinkaew's ***Ong Bak: Thai Warrior*** (Thailand).

The 2005 Sarasota Film Festival Audience Award for Best Short Film was presented to director Tony Mosher's ***Frijolito, Go!***

The Regal Entertainment Group, **7th Annual Sarasota Film Festival**, presented by Mercedes-Benz of Sarasota, ended on Sunday, February 6th after 10 days of films, parties, seminars, education and excitement. This year's program, coordinated by new festival programmer Tom Hall, was a celebration of diversity and internationality. From the pre-fest engagement of the third annual presentation of CineSymphony!, and "Belle of the Ball" tribute to movie music magic with the outstanding vocalists **Paige O'Hara** and **Michael Piontek** to the Opening Night kick off on January 28th with the East Coast premiere of ***The Thing About My Folks***, and the visit of its stars **Peter Falk** and **Paul Reiser** (who also wrote the screenplay), and director **Raymond De Felitta**, through to the Gala Tribute celebration to Career Achievement Honoree **Rutger Hauer**, and the Regal Entertainment Group's Sarasota Film Festival's Filmmaker Tribute Honoree **Ms. Leslie Caron**, the festival was a beehive of activity. Over 38,000 guests attended the Festival throughout the ten days. The festival presented over 150 narrative, documentary and short films in programs including Women's Voices, World Cinema, Family Films, Industry Spotlight and Independent Visions. Among the films and guests appearing at the festival were **Bille August** and **Connie Nielsen** with ***Return To Sender***; **Jerry Springer** and **Philippe Martinez** with ***Citizen Verdict***; **Senator George McGovern** and **Stephen Vittoria** with ***One Bright Shining Moment: The Forgotten Summer of George McGovern***; **Christian Campbell**, **John Kassir**, **Christine Lakin**, **Andy Fickman** and others from ***Reefer Madness***, **Rob Spera** with ***Fathers and Sons***, Art Detective **Harold J. Smith**, **Rebecca Dreyfus**, and **Susannah Ludwig** from ***Stolen***; Straight from Sundance where it won the Audience Award for Best American Documentary came ***Murderball*** and **Joe Soares**, **Chris Igoe** and over **20 wheelchair Quad-Rugby athletes**, **Ida May Martinez**, **Ella Waldek** and **Ruth Leitman** from ***Lipstick and Dynamite***, ***Piss & Vinegar: The First Ladies of Wrestling***, as well as many many more producers, directors, actors.... Among our special guests and honorees, the festival hosted were **Gary Busey** in for a special screening of ***The Buddy Holly Story*** and "An Evening With...", Luncheon Under the Banyans Honoree **Lainie Kazan** (who also served as emcee for the Tribute gala), The World Cinema Celebration and the **Tribute To Wellspring**, the independent distribution company that has emerged as a true leader by distributing challenging films that epitomize the finest in international cinema; **Dennis Farina** in for a luncheon in his honor and to support his good friends; Musical visits by Saxophonist **Tom Scott**, **Lez Zepplin**, **Devotchka**, **Bob Mould**, **Ted Leo and the Pharmacists** and legendary record producer **Jack Douglas** who presented the Award for Music Achievement to **Levon Helm** who then rocked late into the night; And, of course, the wonderful Filmmaker Tribute Gala at the Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota for the festivals two deserving honorees, SFF Career Achievement Honoree **Rutger Hauer**, and the SFF Filmmaker Tribute Honoree **Ms. Leslie Caron**. And, most exciting, all the area students who passed through the festival and experienced the art of filmmaking via production programs, backstage theatre visits, and screenings as well as many of our filmmakers visiting and talking out in their classrooms. The dates for the 8th Annual Sarasota Film Festival will be March 31 thru April 9, 2006. See you There!

PHOTOGRAPHS OF FESTIVAL EVENTS, PARTIES, FILMMAKERS AND GUESTS ARE AVAILABLE at www.gettyimages.com go to entertainment, search: Sarasota Film Festival And/Or at www.DMIphoto.com go to Sarasota Film Festival.

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