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**Producers Robert May and Lisa Marie Stetler to be honored
at Northeast Pennsylvania Film Festival's Gala Kickoff March 22nd**

Opening night festivities to feature encore screening of May's "The Station Agent"
Stetler to also headline "Pitch, Fund, Cast" panel discussion March 23

WAVERLY, PA (March 5, 2019) – A pair of national film producers with local ties will be honored at the Northeast Pennsylvania Film Festival's Opening Night Gala slated for Friday, March 22, 7 p.m, at the Waverly Community House.

Robert May, originally from Dallas, Pennsylvania, will receive the festival's F. Lammot Belin Award for Excellence in Cinema. Lisa Maria Stetler, who hails from Waverly, Pennsylvania, will receive the festival's Vision Award during the festival's opening-night festivities that will include cocktails and light fare.

Tickets for the gala event are \$65 in advance, \$70 at the door and can be purchased online at nepafilmfestival.com or by calling 570-586-8191. An encore presentation of May's *The Station Agent* will be screened during the opening night gala with May introducing the film and hosting an audience Q + A after.

May, originally from Dallas, PA, founded SenArt Films in 2000 with a focus on character-driven films. May has produced seven feature films to date which have collectively garnered over 40 awards including the Oscar®, BAFTA, Independent Spirit Award and Human Rights Award.

May's films include *The Station Agent*, directed by then first time director Tom McCarthy, which starred Peter Dinklage, Patricia Clarkson and Bobby Cannavale; *The Fog of War* (Errol Morris), *Stevie* (Steve James); *The War Tapes* (Deborah Scranton); and *Bonneville* (Chris Rowley). May's directorial debut, *Kids for Cash*, a film about greed, corruption and kids, earned the coveted *New York Times Critic's Pick* and went on to garner notable critic reviews. *The Hollywood Reporter* and *Variety* call the film "Shocking, continually surprising," "Riveting! A real-life thriller that rivals most dramatic fiction." May's latest project, *Lust for Gold: A Race Against Time*

(currently in post-production), follows five men and a dog as they travel deep within Superstition Mountain, Arizona, in search of buried treasure.

In addition to May's award presentation, Waverly native and Abington Heights graduate Lisa Marie Stetler will receive the Vision Award for serving as the force behind the animated film *Ferdinand*.

"I read the book and I immediately saw it as a movie," Stetler says of the popular 1936 children's classic 'The Story of Ferdinand,' by Munro Leaf. Not one to take no for an answer, Stetler pitched her idea to turn the beloved tale of a gentle bull who loved to smell the flowers into a movie to countless industry execs until 20th Century Fox and Blue Sky Studios signed on, releasing the animated film in 2017 with Stetler serving as producer.

Stetler's vigilant crusade to bring Ferdinand's anti-bullying message to the big screen has certainly paid off. Not only was it a global box office smash, it was nominated for a host of awards including Golden Globe and Academy Award nominations. "I knew I was supposed to do this," Stetler says.

The Northeast Pennsylvania Film Festival, presented by the Waverly Community House and supported by the F. Lamot Belin Arts Foundation, is slated for March 22 through 24 in a variety of venues throughout downtown Scranton and the Waverly Community House. Dedicated to nurturing emerging and independent filmmakers from Northeast Pennsylvania and around the world, the three-day festival correspondingly promotes cultural awareness and appreciation of film as an art form by exposing local audiences to unique and original cinema.

Now in its third year, the Festival's growing reputation is built on a commitment to offer the region access to new and independently produced films by a wide range of emerging and established filmmakers. The 2019 NEPA Film Festival will screen three days' worth of films, including features, horror and animated shorts, documentaries, and international films along with the opening night gala, artist tributes, presentations and panel discussions, and the ever-popular Mystery Box Challenge.

In addition to accepting the Vision Award at the Friday, March 22nd gala, Stetler will also lead a panel brunch discussion on Saturday, March 23, at 10:30 a.m. at Posh at the Scranton Club in downtown Scranton. Targeted towards established and wannabe filmmakers as well as actors seeking to make it on the big screen, *Pitch, Fund, Cast* will also include Mountain Top filmmaker Chris Fetchko and New York City casting director Mia Cusumano.

Fetchko (director, writer and producer) is prepping for his fourth feature film project, *Blinded by Ed*, a dark romantic comedy, and a fifth feature film project, *Island People*, his first foray into the horror genre.

Cusumano, formerly of Old Forge, began her career as the Casting Coordinator for ABC's Primetime Casting Office and her credits range from primetime television pilots and series to studio feature films. Her most recent film projects include *Lez Bomb*, *My Cousin's Wedding*, *I Feel Pretty*, *Centigrade*, *Bang Bang*, and *Antarctica*. In addition to providing insight on casting for filmmakers, she will offer advice on auditioning for roles during the brunch and will accept headshots and resumes from aspiring actors afterwards.

Pitch, Fund, Cast will be held Saturday, March 23, 10:30 a.m., at Posh at the Scranton Club. Tickets are \$25 advance, \$30 at the door and includes brunch.

A limited number of All-Access Film Festival Passes are available for \$125 in advance and includes admission to the Opening Night Gala, the *Pitch, Fund, Cast Brunch*, the Charles Brandt presentation *When Scorsese Calls*, as well as all films and other events. For more information or to purchase All-Access passes, individual tickets or day passes, please visit nepafilmfestival.com.

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ABOUT THE NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA FILM FESTIVAL

Established in 2016 by the Waverly Community House, The Northeast Pennsylvania Film Festival is supported by the F. Lamot Belin Arts Foundation and its mission to "build community through the arts." Dedicated to nurturing emerging and independent filmmakers from Northeast Pennsylvania and around the world, the three-day festival correspondingly promotes cultural awareness and appreciation of film as an art form by exposing local audiences to unique and original cinema. For more information or to purchase tickets for events scheduled March 22 through 24, 2019, visit nepafilmfestival.com. Also follow Northeastern Pennsylvania Film Festival on Facebook and Instagram.

ABOUT OUR SPONSORS

The third annual Northeast Pennsylvania Film Festival, a project of Scranton Tomorrow, is sponsored by The Lackawanna County Council of the Arts, WVIA Public Media, the People's Security Bank and Trust, and ATR Properties.