

TWIN CITIES PUBLIC TELEVISION

MEDIA ADVISORY

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For immediate release

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Twin Cities Public Television's *Hoop Dreams* tops list of 25 best documentaries of all time

International Documentary Association vote demonstrates film's lasting legacy

ST. PAUL—*Hoop Dreams*, the 1994 film co-produced by *tpt* about two African American teenagers and their struggle for basketball stardom, has been voted the best documentary in movie history by the International Documentary Association (IDA).

To help celebrate its 25th anniversary, the organization asked its 3,000 world-wide members -- filmmakers, executives and educators -- to determine the top 25 documentaries of all time. Voters selected from a list of over 700 titles, and could add up to five write-ins. *Hoop Dreams* emerged at the top of the list.

The film documents five years in the lives of William Gates and Arthur Agee, two Chicago teens who must balance the difficult realities of inner-city life with their hopes of one day reaching the NBA. Filmmakers Steve James, Frederick Marx, and Peter Gilbert collected 250 hours of film; the result was a rich and complex portrait that explored issues of race, economic division, education and values in contemporary America and offered deeply intimate views of inner-city life.

Twin Cities Public Television as co-producer, along with Chicago-based Kartemquin Films, was involved from the earliest stages of the project; procuring crucial early and finishing funds, helping with production, and producing a major educational outreach campaign as well as two companion programs. In all, *tpt* VP Gerry Richman and executive producer Catherine Allan would be involved for over five years on what evolved into a three-hour feature documentary for theatrical release and PBS distribution, and one of the most loved documentaries of all time.

In an essay for IDA, Scott Foundas writes, "The word 'epic' is applied to movies so offhandedly nowadays that it has nearly lost its meaning, but *Hoop Dreams* is one of the few that merits the term an epic not just about the popular religion of sports, but about the vicissitudes of race and class, and the steep price of admission to the American Dream."

Upon initial release, *Hoop Dreams* received high critical and popular acclaim and was on more critics' top ten lists than any other film that year. It won the 1994 Sundance Film Festival Audience Award for Best Documentary, a Peabody, received an Academy Award nomination for Best Editing; and in 2000, Roger Ebert named *Hoop Dreams* the best film of the 1990s.

Thirteen years later, *Hoop Dreams* is still gathering praise and is now considered a landmark documentary in several respects: One of the first feature-length films shot entirely on video, it helped to usher in the digital revolution, while its large and enthusiastic audiences in theaters across the country demonstrated big-screen potential for nonfiction films.

Executive producer Catherine Allan says, "I am tremendously proud to have been associated with *Hoop Dreams* and grateful to have met William and Arthur and their families. What makes *Hoop Dreams* so enormously popular and timeless is that it is not only a film about basketball; it is a film about life, the struggles to raise children, to get an education, to take responsibility for one's decisions."

ABOUT *tpt*

The mission of Twin Cities Public Television is to "harness the power of television and other media for the public good." A not for profit educational, civic, and cultural resource, *tpt* presents original television productions for national and state broadcast. Productions include the Emmy Award winning Benjamin Franklin; the Emmy winning *The Forgetting: A Portrait of Alzheimer's*; the Emmy winning *Suze Orman: The Laws of Money, The Lessons of Life*; the *DragonflyTV* science series for kids; the popular public affairs program *Almanac*, and the innovative Minnesota Channel, which magnifies the impact of Minnesota's finest public service organizations using the power of television. One of the most watched PBS affiliates in the nation, *tpt* is based in St. Paul and operates seven digital stations in addition to analog channels *tpt 2* and *tpt 17*.

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