



## The Women In Film Foundation Announces 2005 Film Finishing Fund Recipients

*Nine Awardees Hail From California, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York,  
North Carolina and Pennsylvania*

Awards Underwritten by National Presenting Sponsor  
General Motors Corporation

**LOS ANGELES – June 7, 2005 – For Immediate Release** – Recipients of the **2005 Women In Film Foundation’s Film Finishing Fund** were announced today by **The Women In Film Foundation (WIFF)** and national presenting sponsor, **General Motors Corporation (GM)**.

The WIFF Film Finishing Fund supports filmmakers who make thoughtful and provocative films by or about women. The program was created to assist filmmakers who have made, but not completed, documentary, dramatic, educational, narrative, animated or experimental works which demonstrate advanced and innovative skills and whose work relates to the goals of Women In Film. These goals include: increasing employment and promoting equal opportunities for women; enhancing the media image of women; and influencing prevailing attitude and practices regarding and on behalf of women.

The only one of its kind, the WIFF Film Finishing Fund is in its 20<sup>th</sup> year of existence and has awarded more than \$1.6 million in cash and in-kind services. Cash awards range from \$1,000 to \$5,000. In-kind grants for post-production services vary according to the needs of the recipient.

This year, nine finalists were chosen from a field of 125 applicants from 18 states and two foreign countries. Their works include six feature documentaries, one narrative feature, one dramatic short and one experimental short. Plans for a showcase of this year’s awardees will be announced shortly.

Winners include: **Rosie Vargas Goldberg**, Chicago, Ill., for the narrative drama *Bloom*; **Nancy Stevens**, New York, N.Y., for the documentary *We Also Dance*; **Barbara Attie and Janet Goldwater**, Bala Cynwyd, Penn., for the documentary *Rosita*; **Melissa Mummert**, Charlotte, N.C., for the documentary *A Question of Guilt*; **Carol Ciancutti-Leyra**, New York, N.Y., for the documentary *Absolutely Safe*; **Aruna Naimji and Aram Hekinian**, New York, N.Y., for the experimental short narrative *One Balloon*; **Gabriela Quirós**, Albany, Calif., for the documentary *Beautiful Sin*; **Robin Larsen**, Los Angeles, Calif., for the dramatic short *Slaved*; and **Michal Goldman**, Waltham, Mass., for the documentary *At Home in Utopia*.

### **2005 Film Finishing Fund Recipients:**

#### ***Bloom***

A 112-minute narrative dramatic feature by Rosie Vargas Goldberg, Chicago, Ill., about two women, one Latina and one Jewish, who deal with unhappiness and frustration through therapy and find that similar problems plague very diverse women. Vargas, who has raised all the funds independently to date, will receive a \$3,000 grant. A first-time filmmaker, she has enlisted support and advice from Chicago’s IFP and film community.

### *We Also Dance*

A 59-minute documentary by Nancy Stevens, New York, N.Y., about four blind and vision-impaired people who transcend their disability and pursue their shared passion for dancing. This film has been selected as the recipient of the “Gretchen Bender Fund” out of New York, which was started by the family of Bender, a WIFTI member who passed away last year. Stevens will be awarded \$2,000. WIFF will also support this film with in-kind sound services in New York.

### *Rosita*

A film about a nine-year-old girl from Nicaragua who is raped on her way to school in Costa Rica and becomes pregnant. A 60-minute documentary by Barbara Attie and Janet Goldwater, Bala Cynwyd, Penn., the film traces the difficulties the girl’s parents encounter attempting to obtain an abortion. The government, medical establishment and church all forbid it, but the family perseveres. Barbara and Janet will be awarded \$3,000.

### *A Question of Guilt*

Melissa Mummert, Charlotte, N.C., has dealt with the consequences of overly-harsh sentences for drug conspiracy convictions for women in this 58-minute documentary. An African-American woman is serving two life sentences for living in a house with a felon. The film explores the consequences of her absence on her family. She will be awarded \$3,000.

### *Absolutely Safe*

This 58-minute documentary takes an in-depth look at the controversy over the safety of breast implants and the role that beauty plays in our culture. Carol Ciancutti-Leyra, New York, N.Y., will receive \$3,000.

### *One Balloon*

Aruna Naimji and Aram Hekinian, New York, N.Y., have made a 20-minute experimental short narrative film, a surreal tale about a woman whose biological clock forces her to make a choice between sexuality and intellect. The filmmakers will receive in-kind services in New York for video-to-film transfer services.

### *Beautiful Sin*

This hour-long documentary by Gabriela Quirós, Albany, Calif., follows three couples from Costa Rica, whose efforts to have children through in-vitro fertilization have hit roadblocks, leading the country to outlaw IVF for religious and political reasons. A grant of \$3,000 will allow completion of animated graphic work for the film.

### *Slaved*

A 25-minute dramatic short telling the real-life story of the tragedy and liberation of a young Ukrainian woman who survives sex trade trafficking between Eastern Europe and Los Angeles. Robin Larsen, a student Academy Award®-winning filmmaker from Los Angeles, Calif., will receive \$3,000.

### *At Home in Utopia*

This 60-minute documentary by Michal Goldman, Waltham., Mass., deals with a radical utopian community in the Bronx founded in the 1920s. With subject matter centered partially around the women of this community, this film will receive \$3,000.

## **About the WIF/GM Alliance:**

The **Women In Film/General Motors Alliance** was created to expand WIF programs supporting women in the entertainment industry. The national initiative was announced in January 2005 by Iris Grossman, WIF president; Judith R. James, WIF/GM national committee chair; and Gary Cowger, GM group vice president.

Founded in 1973 in Los Angeles, **Women In Film** ([www.wif.org](http://www.wif.org)) is the leading non-profit organization dedicated to women in the global entertainment industry. Its purpose is to empower, promote, nurture and mentor women in the industry through a network of valuable contacts, events, programs, workshops, finishing funds and scholarships. In the U.S., there are chapters in Arizona, Atlanta, Dallas, Florida, Houston, Kansas City, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Maryland, New England, New York, Palm Springs, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington, D.C. The international network, Women In

Film and Television International ([www.wifti.org](http://www.wifti.org)), of which WIF-Los Angeles is a founding member, boasts 35 chapters on six continents. Member chapters range from developing nations to countries with established industries, including the U.S., Mexico, Jamaica, Australia, Ireland, South Africa, Canada, France, United Kingdom, India and New Zealand, to name a few.

**General Motors Corp.** (NYSE: GM), the world's largest automaker, has been the global industry sales leader since 1931. Founded in 1908, GM today employs about 321,000 people around the world. It has manufacturing operations in 32 countries and its vehicles are sold in 200 countries. In 2004, GM sold nearly 9 million cars and trucks globally, up 4 percent and the second-highest total in the company's history. GM's global headquarters are at the GM Renaissance Center in Detroit. More information on GM can be found at [www.gm.com](http://www.gm.com).

GM is a long-time contributor to both women's initiatives and to the arts and culture. GM and the GM Foundation support a variety of arts and cultural institutions that promote appreciation of the arts, recognition of diverse cultures and awareness of arts in education programs.

####

#### **Contacts**

Catherine Olim or Joy Fehily  
PMK-HBH P.R.  
310-289-6200  
[www.wif.org](http://www.wif.org)

Peg Holmes  
General Motors Corp.  
313-667-2904  
[margaret.g.holmes@gm.com](mailto:margaret.g.holmes@gm.com)