

**JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

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**Greenville Bicentennial Film Festival Celebrates “One Greenville"**

   Greenville, Mississippi - May 2, 2017 - Blue Magnolia Films in partnership with The City of Greenville, will host a FREE public screening, Saturday, May 6, at 8 p.m. at Schelben Park, to premiere a series of photo stories, produced by local community leaders, to commemorate the Mississippi Bicentennial.

The photo stories, each four minutes in length, highlight the importance of cultural and economic for revitalization. Each participant captures the spirit of “One Greenville” uniquely, through their own lens, in order to pay homage to the past and cast a bright vision for the future. Entertainment, including music/DJ will begin at 5 p.m. Admission is free and open to the public. Locally-themed food vendors, include hot tamales and barbecue.

Participants include: Betty Lynn Cameron (Delta Hot Tamale Festival), Benjy Nelken (Hebrew Union Of Greenville), Raymond Wong (St. Joseph Catholic School), Johnny Toy & Alex Jackson (Coleman High School), Sharon Walker (Greenville Reflection &Youth Development Museum), Claude Marchesini (Bill Boykin downtown development), Essie Patterson (Patterson Farms), Sylvia Jackson (Area Agency on Aging), Mable Starks (Mississippi Action for Community Education), Genesis Norman (Mayor Errick D. Simmons & Senator Derrick T. Simmons).

Local partners include: Main Street Greenville, Washington County Economic Alliance, Greenville and Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and developer, Bill Boykin; Other supporters include: Blue Magnolia Films, Barefoot Workshops and Corner To Corner Productions and Greenville native, Laeitta Wade/Eittabug Productions.

Resulting photos stories will be posted online using social media and will be integrated into downtown revitalization projects, including a "walkable” gallery, community events and a book project highlighting Bicentennial stories around the state.

       Greenville Mayor, Errick D. Simmons says, “The process of honoring Greenville’s diverse stories and storytellers, lends itself to unifying the community on many levels, culturally, economically and moving people to engage with the vision for One Greenville. Mississippi’s Bicentennial is a moment to take pride in our success stories to date, while casting a positive vision for the future.”

"We are proud of the multiplicity of voices who will come together for this week,” he adds, "particularly two youth from Greenville High School, who are taking their first steps toward leadership with this opportunity."

"This year is commemorating 50 years of MACE in existence, so we want to celebrate our founders- Fannie Lou Hamer, Amsie Moore, Annie Devine, Unita Blackwell," says Mable Starks, President of Mississippi Action for Community Education, "Somewhere we stopped telling our stories. This year is a rebuilding of that vision that hope and telling those stories. Because once you know who you are, you can begin to develop a roadmap to where you want to go.”

Benjy Nelken, President of the Hebrew Union Of Greenville, will focus his story on the legacy of Jewish history in Greenville, "I want to focus on the spirituality of the Hebrew Union Temple and not just the building itself but the congregates. We have a congregation that's 120 years old and we're still going strong. And we want to show and illustrate, that still exists, and Jewish heritage is ongoing.”

Local partners hope the stories will catalyze good projects already on the rise, "We do have a historic district downtown," adds Daniel Boggs, Executive Director, Main Street Greenville. "I am very interested in Bill Boykin, our local developer, because there is a movement across the nation around getting back to the core, our downtown. His projects, including The Lofts, can hopefully be the spark plug that for that engine.”

Betty Lynn Cameron, Co-Founder of Hot Tamale Festival, says her Bicentennial photo story “is a way to celebrate and to give new audiences an opportunity to check it out for themselves!”

“It’s only positive for tourism," adds Wesley Smith, Executive Director of Greenville and Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau. "I think it helps the town’s perception of itself, which changes the message we portray on the outside."

Greenville is one of ten small towns elected to participate in the Mississippi Bicentennial Small Town Film Festival, a statewide celebration. Alison Fast, Founder of Blue Magnolia Films says, “Stories are a powerful agent to uplift communities and renew a sense of place, in addition to culture, identity and values. We are working with communities to reclaim those aspects upon which future generations can build.”

The event will take place:

Date:          Saturday, May 6, 2017

Time:         5 - 11 p.m.; Film Premiere at 8 p.m.

Location:    Schelben Park. Park on City Front Greenville, MS 39564 (Parking on City Front)

*(In case of rain, E.E. Bass Cultural Arts Center 323 South Main Street Greenville, MS 38701)*

This event is FREE and open to the public. Official hashtags for the event are: #onegreenville, #greenvillepride #MS200 Visit our Facebook Page. Search @GreenvilleMS

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