



For Immediate Release

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P.O.V. Presents Encores of Acclaimed Films “The Hobart Shakespeareans” and “A Family Undertaking” In August on PBS

The award-winning P.O.V. films **The Hobart Shakespeareans** and **A Family Undertaking** will have encore presentations on **Tuesday, Aug. 7** and **Tuesday, Aug. 14, 2007**, respectively on PBS during Pledge Drive. The films will air at 10 p.m. as part of the 20th season of the P.O.V. documentary series. (Check local listings.) American television’s longest-running independent documentary series, P.O.V. is public television’s premier showcase for point-of-view, nonfiction films.

Tuesday, Aug. 7 —Mel Stuart, who has directed over 180 films, cites **The Hobart Shakespeareans** as one of the films he is most proud of, along with “Wattstax,” which aired on P.O.V., and “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory.” In **The Hobart Shakespeareans**, he profiles teacher Rafe Esquith, who has a strong point of view about educating children of immigrants. Teaching in Los Angeles at one of the nation’s largest inner-city grade schools, Hobart Elementary, Esquith leads his class of fifth graders through an uncompromising curriculum. At the end of the semester, each student participates in a full-length Shakespeare play: in this case “Hamlet,” with advice from actors Ian McKellen and Michael York. Despite language barriers and poverty, these “Hobart Shakespeareans” attend outstanding colleges, motivated by a teacher honored with a National Medal of Arts. The film won a Christopher and CINE Golden Eagle Award, plus the Gold Camera Award at the U.S. International Film and Video Festival. It is a co-presentation with Thirteen/WNET New York.

Tuesday, Aug. 14 — Prior to the 20th century, most Americans prepared their dead for burial with the help of family and friends, but today most funerals are part of a multi-million-dollar industry run by professionals. This increased reliance on mortuaries has alienated Americans from life’s only inevitability — death. Elizabeth Westrate’s **A Family Undertaking** explores the growing home-funeral movement by following several families in their most intimate moments as they reclaim the end of life, forgoing a typical mortuary funeral to care for their loved ones at home. The film is an Independent Television Service (ITVS) co-presentation.

On P.O.V. Interactive:

The Hobart Shakespeareans companion Web site (www.pbs.org/pov/hobart) offers exclusive streaming video clips from the film, a Q&A with filmmaker Mel Stuart, opportunities for viewers to “talk back” and talk to each other, and these features:

- Book Excerpt: *There are No Shortcuts*. Rafe Esquith shares his ideas about the state of elementary education in the U.S., the importance of parents participating in teacher selection at their schools and on teaching generally.

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- Reading List: The Hobart Shakespeareans choose their favorite books from Rafe's reading list and explain why.
- For Educators: *Rafe's Top 10 Tips for Fundraising*. Esquith divulges his secrets for raising funds, and outlines some basic tenets from his classroom that teachers can use all year long.

Access the Web site for **A Family Undertaking** at www.pbs.org/pov/afamilyundertaking for a Q&A with filmmaker Elizabeth Westrate, updates on the people featured in the film, and these features:

- Ask an Expert: A panel of home funeral guides and advocates responds to questions that viewers submitted in this unique online resource. Find out about the laws in your state, how to start the planning process, and more.
- Interactive Timeline — Dying in America: A Chronology: Trace the evolution of the American way of death from the colonial days through the present. Along the way you'll find changes in beliefs about death and grief, the emergence of the funeral industry, developments in the field of medicine, and the impact of war.



Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and celebrating its 20th season on PBS in 2007, the award-winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running showcase on television to feature the work of America's best contemporary-issue independent filmmakers. Airing Tuesdays at 10 p.m., June through September, with primetime specials during the year, P.O.V. has brought nearly 250 award-winning documentaries to millions nationwide, and now has a Webby Award-winning online series, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. Since 1988, P.O.V. has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information about P.O.V is available online at www.pbs.org/pov.

P.O.V. Community Engagement and Education

P.O.V. provides Discussion Guides for all films as well as curriculum-based P.O.V. Lesson Plans for select films to promote the use of independent media among varied constituencies. Available free online, these original materials ensure the ongoing use of P.O.V.'s documentaries with educators, community workers, opinion leaders and general audiences. P.O.V. works closely with local PBS stations to partner with museums, libraries, schools and community-based organizations to raise awareness of the issues in P.O.V.'s films. P.O.V.'s *Youth Views* expands these efforts by working with youth-service organizations.

Major funding for P.O.V. is provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Ford Foundation, the Educational Foundation of America, PBS and public television viewers. Funding for P.O.V.'s *Diverse Voices Project* is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, with additional support from JPMorgan Chase Foundation, the official sponsor of P.O.V.'s 20th Anniversary Campaign. P.O.V. is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston, and Thirteen/WNET New York.

American Documentary, Inc. (www.americandocumentary.org)

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation. Simon Kilmurry is executive director of American Documentary | P.O.V.

TAPE REQUESTS: Please note that broadcast versions of these films are available upon request, as the film may be edited to comply with new FCC regulations.