

**SPEECH BY DARYL DUKE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS BEING
A RECIPIENT OF THE DIRECTORS GUILD OF CANADA LIFETIME
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
OCTOBER 4, 2003**

THANK YOU

ALAN GOLUBUFF

THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

JEFF WARREN

CARRIE SUTHERLAND

SURLA GUNNERSON

AT THE TABLE

MILTON AND FEI WONG

MICHAEL LEVINE AND DONNA ORENSTEIN

FRANK DEKKER

MARGO LANE

DAVID DUKE AND MELANIE

ANNE-MARIE

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TO BE A DIRECTOR IS TO BE IN LOVE WITH SHADOWS, PHANTOMS,
LOVELY GHOSTS, HAUNTING THE BY-WAYS OF OUR HEARTS.

IN HONOURING ME THIS EVENING YOU HAVE GIVEN THESE IMAGES OF MY
LIFE A RECOGNITION THAT IS NOW PERMANENT AND FOR THAT I AM
TRULY GRATEFUL.

FILM FOR ME BEGAN AT A VERY YOUNG AGE: WITH THE SCREENING OF
TWO VERY MAGICAL AND REMARKABLE FILMS. EACH OF THEM TO NO
SMALL DEGREE CHANGED MY LIFE.

ONE WAS MARCEL CARNÉ'S "LES ENFANTS DU PARADISE" THE OTHER
WAS A DOCUMENTARY – HUMPHREY JENNINGS' "FIRES WERE STARTED."

THE FLUID, OPERATIC, EMOTIONAL SCENES OF "LES ENFANTS" WERE
TOTALLY UNLIKE ANYTHING I ENCOUNTERED IN THOSE YEARS IN A VERY
PRESBYTERIAN WASP VANCOUVER.

I AM SURE THAT THAT FILM MADE ME SEE THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY AND
I AM SURE I SHOT THINGS DIFFERENTLY EVEN DOWN TO DIRECTING "THE
THORN BIRDS."

"FIRES WERE STARTED" WAS THE WORK OF A BRITISH DOCUMENTARY
FILM MAKER WHO CHRONICLED THE LIFE OF A FIRE CREW DURING THE
LONDON BLITZ. IT LED ME WITHOUT HESITATION WHEN THE CHANCE
FIRST AROSE TO THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA.

IF I AM HERE BECAUSE OF TWO FILMS, I AM ALSO HERE BECAUSE OF TWO
MEN.

THE FIRST WAS EARL BIRNEY WHO WAS ONE OF CANADA'S BEST POETS
AND MY ENGLISH PROFESSOR IN CREATIVE WRITING AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA. EARL WAS A TOUGH HUMOURED FILLED TASK
MASTER WHO ALLOWED NO FAT NOR FALSE EMOTION TO CREEP INTO
OUR WORK.

GUY GLOVER, A PRODUCER AT THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD, SOME HOW
FOUND HIS WAY TO THOSE POEMS I HAD PUBLISHED. HE SAID MY POEMS
HAD A GREAT VISUAL SENSE AND WAS I OPEN TO A JOB AT

THE NFB. FACING IMMEDIATE UNEMPLOYMENT AS SOON AS I WAS OUT
OF UNIVERSITY, I COULD NOT GET A LETTER BACK TO GUY GLOVER FAST
ENOUGH.

I HAVE HAD A LIFE IN FILM AND TELEVISION EVER SINCE. I KNOW
TONIGHT YOU'LL APPRECIATE THAT MY FIRST EFFORTS AT THE BOARD
INVOLVED A SHORT FILM CALLED "HOW TO FIGHT FOREST FIRES WITH
HAND PUMPS," AND ANOTHER WORK OF LASTING INFLUENCE CALLED
"HOW TO PACKAGE BETTER BONELESS COD."

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I CANNOT IMAGINE EXCHANGING A LIFE OF A DIRECTOR FOR ANY OTHER AND TONIGHT YOU HAVE HONOURED THIS DECISION IN THE MOST PROFOUND WAY.

WHEN THE GUILD CAME INTO BEING IN THE 1960s, I FELT AS THOUGH THOSE OF US IN CANADA IN THIS BUSINESS AT LAST HAD A HOME. WE WERE NOT SIMPLY ORPHANS AT THE MERCY OF NETWORK MEETINGS NOR POLITICAL CHANGES IN OTTAWA. WE HAD AN INSTITUTION THAT COULD PROTECT OUR CAREERS AND WE IN TURN COULD EFFECT POLICY AND POLICY CHANGES WITHIN THIS COUNTRY AND ABROAD.

FOR THOSE OF US WHO WERE ONCE YOUNG AND ARE YOUNG NO LONGER I ASK, "DID WE DO ENOUGH?"

ONE OF THE INFLUENTIAL BOOKS OF MY BEGINNING YEARS WAS "THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY," BY THE CANADIAN JOURNALIST BRUCE HUTCHINSON. I AND OTHERS WERE DETERMINED TO TAKE OUR CAMERAS OUT TO SHOW THE PEOPLE OF CANADA WHAT THIS COUNTRY WAS REALLY LIKE.

55 YEARS LATER I LOOK AROUND AND I SAY "WE ARE STILL AN UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY." WE MAY KNOW WHAT THE RIVERS AND MOUNTAINSIDES LOOK LIKE, BUT WE DO NOT KNOW OUR OWN PEOPLE.

CANADA IS A COUNTRY OF GREAT DIVERSITY. A MILLION CHINESE LIVE HERE. HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS WHO SPEAK HINDI, VIETNAMESE, ARABIC AND PERSIAN NEVER HAVE THEIR STORIES TOLD. CANADA HAS A GREAT NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN GREAT PAIN AND IN GREAT PROVERTY. MANY PEOPLE ARE NEAR DEATH AND WILL DIE ALONE WERE IT NOT FOR THE INFLUENCE OF OUR MEMBERS AND THE STORIES THEY CAN TELL.

I HAVE SEEN THE PRESIDENTS OF OUR GUILD IN RECENT YEARS EFFECTIVELY STATING AT GOVERNMENT HEARINGS THAT WE MUST HAVE A TELEVISION OF MEANING. THEIR ACTIONS AND THEIR SPEECHES HAVE MADE ME VERY PROUD. IT IS THEY WHO WILL ENSURE THAT TELEFILM, OUR BROADCASTERS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS WILL NOT TURN OUR NATIONAL BOUNDARIES INTO PRISON WALLS BUT WILL ALLOW OUR MEMBERS TO SHOOT FILMS AND TELEVISION FREELY THROUGHOUT THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD AND TO EXPLORE OTHER CULTURES AND LANGUAGES.

I HAVE SIGNED ON TWO TELEVISION STATIONS IN MY CAREER, WORKED FOR BOTH CANADIAN NETWORKS, FOR ALL THREE OF THE MAIN U.S. NETWORKS, AND FOR MANY OF THE STUDIOS IN HOLLYWOOD.

AS A DIRECTOR I HAVE BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH TO HEAR THE MUSLIM CALL TO PRAYER FROM SOME OF OUR PLANET'S MOST MAGICAL LOCATIONS, THE GREAT CITY OF ISTANBUL, THE SQUAT VILLAGE MOSQUES ALONG THE HUMID NORTH COAST OF JAVA IN INDONESIA, FROM THE SPIKEY FRESHLY PAINTED MINARETES IN BOSNIA TO THE GRAND LEARNED RELIGIOUS CENTRES OF CAIRO.

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I HAVE STOOD ATOP THE GREAT PYRAMIDS OF CHEOPS AS A SAND STORM BLEW IN WITH FURY FROM THE EGYPTIAN DESERT AND TURNED THE SKY TO THE COLOUR OF A MEAN SWIFTLY SPREADING BRUISE ALL BLACK, BLUE AND UGLY.

I HAVE BEEN BECKONED BY PRESIDENT TITO OF YUGOSLAVIA TO SIT WITH HIM TO CONSUME A TUMBLER OF WHITEHORSE SCOTCH. WHEN I TRIED TO DECLINE HE LEANED TOWARD ME WITH A CHALLENGING VOICE AND ASKED "CAN'T CANADIANS DRINK?"

AND I HAVE STOOD IN THE HUMID RAIN, WITH A GLASS OF TEPID CHAMPAGNE IN MY HAND, WATCHING A SOMBRE GOVERNOR PATTON NEAR TEARS SAY FAREWELL FOREVER AS HONG KONG WAS RETURNED TO CHINA.

A DIRECTOR HAS GREAT MOMENTS OF THE HEART. AND TONIGHT IS ONE OF THOSE MOMENTS.

THANK YOU FOR THE FRIENDSHIP AND SUPPORT YOU HAVE GIVEN ME ALL THESE YEARS. AND THE RECOGNITION YOU HAVE SO GENEROUSLY GRANTED TO ME THIS EVENING.