

## Gallen.Neilly

Market Positioning & Media Strategies  
1981 North Broadway, Suite 400, Walnut Creek, CA 94596  
Tim Gallen . Andrew Neilly

### Contact:

Tim Gallen, Gallen.Neilly  
(925) 930-9848  
Tim@Gallen.com

### Filmmaker Saul Zaentz To Be Honored At First Annual Berkeley FILM Foundation Fundraising Gala

\$100,000 in grants awarded to 12 East Bay filmmakers  
at the October 1 event

September 22, 2009, Berkeley, CA---The Berkeley FILM Foundation (BFF) and the Bay Area film industry will honor legendary filmmaker Saul Zaentz at its 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Berkeley FILM Foundation gala fundraiser at the Zaentz Media Center in Berkeley, California, on Thursday, October 1.

The BFF, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, will also recognize the 12 winners who will share \$100,000 in grants, funded by this newly established program to support local filmmakers and inspire a new generation of emerging East Bay filmmakers.

The first Berkeley FILM Foundation fundraiser is expected to grow into one of the Bay Area's more important annual entertainment industry gatherings, bringing together the producers, actors, financiers, and technical talent that drive the industry today.

Saul Zaentz's career began with Fantasy Records, which recorded Alan Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Lenny Bruce, Mort Sahl and other poets during the San Francisco Renaissance. He went on to record Creedence Clearwater Revival as well as to compile one of the greatest jazz catalogs with artists such as Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk, and Bill Evans.

As a filmmaker, Zaentz became known as one of the "Fog City Mavericks" in recognition of his leadership role in bringing the first wave of independent filmmakers from Hollywood north to the Bay Area. Zaentz received three best picture Oscars for his productions of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," "Amadeus," and "The English Patient." He is also the recipient of the prestigious Irving Thalberg Award. In all, his films garnered 22 Oscars for actors Jack Nicholson, Louis Fletcher, F. Murray Abraham, Juliette Binoche, directors Milos Forman and the late Anthony Minghella, and other filmmakers.

Saul Zaentz also gave a career boost to budding young production and technical professionals from around the East Bay, many of whom are expected to come together to honor him at the event. His patronage at what is now known as the Zaentz Media Center fostered a generation of small social and documentary filmmakers, including Abby Ginzberg who spearheaded the review committee for this year's grant program.

"Many award-winning documentaries and independent films were made possible due to the collaboration of the community of filmmakers Saul attracted and to his economic support," said Ginzberg.

The Berkeley FILM Foundation, a public/private partnership formed last year by the City of Berkeley, Wareham Development and The Saul Zaentz Company, carries on the mission to support and nurture independent filmmakers in the Bay Area's growing entertainment industry.

Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates, one of the Foundation's key founders, said the collaboration between the private sector and the City to make the Foundation a reality was particularly rewarding for him personally.

"We took a good idea and turned it into a reality. Thanks to the inspiration of leaders like Saul Zaentz, the entertainment industry here in the East Bay provides jobs and revenues, and bolsters our reputation as a city that knows how to grow and support its creative community," said Bates.

Another key facilitator behind the formation of the foundation, Wareham Development founder Rich Robbins, said that honoring Saul Zaentz at this first Berkeley FILM Foundation event was especially important because there could be no better example on which future filmmakers could model their aspirations.

"It is pretty amazing how far we have come in such a short time," said Robbins. "In our first year we distributed \$100,000 in grants to filmmakers with the hope that this will help the next generation of filmmakers get a foundation while sustaining the existing film community, who are crucial to our understanding of the social, political and historical context of life in the U.S. and around the world."

Also attending the fundraiser will be this year's Berkeley FILM Foundation grant winners, a group of 12 filmmakers of all ages and experience whose winning projects were chosen from a field of 50 submissions. Their completed productions will be screened in coming months at the monthly Berkeley Filmmakers Screening Series at the Zaentz Media Center.

Local corporate supporters of the Berkeley FILM Foundation fundraiser include Lucasfilm, Ltd., PG&E, Bayer, Meyer Sound Laboratories, Mechanics Bank, and Alta Bates Sutter Medical Center. Jan Wahl, KCBS AM/FM and KRON-TV entertainment reporter, will emcee the event. Tickets for the Foundation fundraising event, which will be held at the revitalized Zaentz Media Center at 2600 Tenth Street in Berkeley on Thursday, October 1, 2009, range in price from \$100 individual tickets to tables of 10 at \$5,000. An invitation may be requested at [jwetterer@warehamdevelopment.com](mailto:jwetterer@warehamdevelopment.com) and reservations are required.

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