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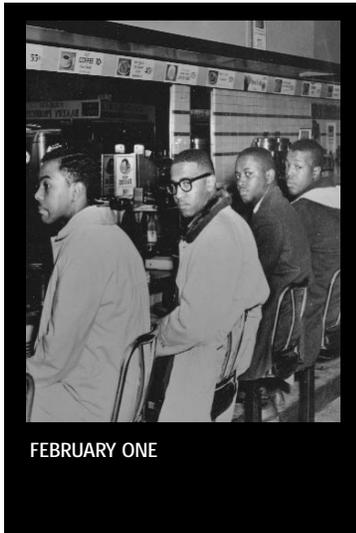
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Pressroom for more information and/or downloadable images:

www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos

Program companion website: www.pbs.org/februaryone



***INDEPENDENT LENS's "FEBRUARY ONE:
The Story of the Greensboro Four"***
CAPTURES CITY OF PERPETUAL CHANGE

*Film About Four College Students Who Changed History
To Be Shown On 45th Anniversary Of Woolworth
Lunch Counter Sit-In*

*Film by Steven Channing and Rebecca Cerese
Premieres Nationally on "Independent Lens"*

Emmy® Award-Winning Series on PBS

Hosted by Susan Sarandon

Tuesday, February 1, 2005 at 10 P.M.

(check local listings)

Celebrating Black History Month

(San Francisco, CA) — ***Independent Len's FEBRUARY ONE*** is the story of how, in one remarkable day, four college freshmen—Ezell Blair, Jr. (now Jibreel Khazan), David Richmond, Franklin McCain and Joseph McNeil—changed the course of American history. On February 1, 1960, the young men, later dubbed the "Greensboro Four," began a sit-in at a Woolworth's lunch counter in a small town in North Carolina. The act of simply sitting down to order food in a restaurant that refused service to anyone but whites is now widely regarded as one of the pivotal moments in the Civil Rights movement. But what rarely gets told is how four idealistic college students became friends and inspired one another to stage the sit-in, or how the burden of history has impacted their lives ever since.

This touching film offers an unusually intimate portrait of four familiar yet little known men whose moral courage at 17 years old not only changed public accommodation laws in North Carolina, but served as a blueprint for non-violent protests throughout the 1960's. The film will be broadcast on **Independent Lens** on **Tuesday, February 1, 2005 at 10 p.m.** (check local listings).



Despite hard-fought gains in the fight for racial equality, segregation was still firmly entrenched in 1960 America. Black citizens were still treated as second-class citizens. There had been some advances in the arena of Civil Rights with the Brown vs. the Board of Education U.S. Supreme Court decision (1954), the Montgomery bus boycott (1955-1956) and the

desegregation of Little Rock (Arkansas) High School (1957), but after 1957 the movement hit a lull.

February 1, 1960 changed all that.

The Greensboro Four were close friends at North Carolina A&T University before they became political activists. Two of the four had grown up where segregation was not legal, while another's father was active in the NAACP. They recount how the idea for the sit-in grew out of those late night "bull sessions" that make college years so rich. On the night of January 31, 1960 the four dared each other to do something that would change the South and their own lives forever. They decided to sit-in at the whites-only lunch counter at Woolworth's in downtown Greensboro the next day.



On February 1, dressed in their Sunday best, the four men sat down at the lunch counter. Frank McCain remembers that he knew then this would be the high point of his life: "I felt clean... I had gained my manhood by that simple act." The four were refused service. When they did not leave, the store manager closed the lunch counter. In the days that followed, they were joined by more students from local Black colleges and a few white students who also sat-in at other lunch counters in Greensboro.

Dr. Vincent Harding reminds us that the Civil Rights Movement was the first major social movement to be covered by television news so word of the events in Greensboro spread across the nation like a prairie fire. Within just a few days students were sitting in at lunch counters in fifty-four cities around the South.

Although Greensboro's civic leadership pressured the president of North Carolina A&T to halt the protests, he counseled the students to follow their own consciences. Finally, after months of protests, the Woolworth management quietly integrated its lunch counter during the summer when students weren't around. The wave of direct action started by the Greensboro Four coalesced in the formation of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the vanguard of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.



FEBRUARY ONE not only fills in one of the most important chapters in the Civil Rights Movement, it reminds us that this was a movement of ordinary people motivated to extraordinary deeds by the need to assert their basic human dignity. This moving film shows how a small group of determined individuals can galvanize a mass movement and focus a nation's attention on injustice.

Additional information and/or downloadable photographs from **FEBRUARY ONE** are available at www.itvs.org/pressroom/photos.

The companion website for **FEBRUARY ONE** (www.pbs.org/februaryone) features detailed information about the film, including exclusive filmmaker Q&A interviews, filmmaker and cast bios and Learn More links and resources pertaining to the film's subject matter. The sites will also feature video previews and a Talkback section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions.

ON AIR PARTICIPANTS

SHELIA BLAIR-CHENG & JEAN HOWARD are Jibreel Khazan's (Ezell Blair Jr.) sisters

CORENE BLAIR is a retired schoolteacher who is Jibreel Khazan's mother.

LEWIS BRANDON is an alumnus of North Carolina A&T State University who also participated in the sit-ins.

DR. WILLIAM CHAFE is the former dean of arts & sciences at Duke University. He is the author of *Civilities and Civil Rights*, the authoritative book on race relations and the civil rights movement in Greensboro, NC.

LEONARD GUYES was the owner and manager of Prego-Guyes, a women's apparel shop located across the street from Woolworth's, whose business was adversely affected by the sit-ins.

C.L. "CURLY" HARRIS was the manager of the Greensboro Woolworth's during the 1960 sit-ins.

DR. VINCENT HARDING was the first director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center in Atlanta and served as director and chairperson of the Institute of the Black World.

JIBREEL KHAZAN was born Ezell Blair, Jr. in Greensboro, NC and is one of the Greensboro Four.

BETTYE MCCAIN met Franklin while she was attending Bennett College in 1959. The women at Bennett were very active in their community, and she and many other "Bennett Belles" participated in the sit-ins.

FRANKLIN MCCAIN is one of the original Greensboro Four.

JOSEPH MCNEIL came to A&T on full scholarship and found it hard to live in the segregated South. He served as the catalyst for the actions of the other Greensboro Four.

DAVID RICHMOND is one of the original Greensboro Four, who died in Greensboro on December 7, 1990. He was 49 years old.

FRANK RICHMOND is the younger brother of the late David Richmond. In **FEBRUARY ONE**, he offers David's perspective on growing up in segregated Greensboro.

HAL SIEBER is the former editor-in-chief of the *Carolina Peacemaker*, the African American newspaper in Greensboro, NC.

GENEVA TISDALE worked at Woolworth's for over 40 years until the store closed in the early 1990s. When manager C. L. Harris integrated the Woolworth's lunch counter in July 1960, Ms. Tisdale was among the first black employees to sit at the counter.

ANN DEARSLEY-VERNON was one of three white female students from Women's College, an all-female public college that is now UNC-Greensboro, who joined the demonstrations on the fourth day of the sit-ins.

CLAUDETTE BURROUGHS-WHITE was one of the first black students to enroll at Women's College. She is now serving as a city council woman in Greensboro, where she works tirelessly to improve race relations in the city.

FEBRUARY ONE Credits

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
PRODUCER
EDITOR/ADDITIONAL WRITER
CO-PRODUCER
WRITER/CO-PRODUCER
CINEMATOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER
AUDIO
MUSIC/SCORE

Dr. Steven Channing
Rebecca Cerese
Thomas Vickers
Cynthia Hill
Daniel Blake Smith
Warren Gentry
Kenneth Conyers
Scott Pearsons

ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

DR. STEVEN CHANNING (Executive Producer) brings a wide range of experiences as an historian, author and Emmy Award-winning filmmaker. He has a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina. Beginning in the 1980s, he began to communicate true stories about the American past through documentary and educational television. His initial productions include *America's 400th Anniversary*, narrated by Andy Griffith, and *Loyalty On Trial*, which explores Constitutional history, and received the American Bar Association's Silver Gavel award. The following year, he produced the Emmy Award-winning historical drama *Alamance* for PBS, on the coming of the American Revolution. **FEBRUARY ONE** is his most recent film project. Next up, Dr. Channing plans to bring his enthusiasm for preserving and sharing stories of our past to the great story of race and leadership in Durham, North Carolina in a project entitled *Durham: A Self-Portrait*.

REBECCA CERESE (Producer) graduated from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, with a degree in communications and English. She has been employed at Video Dialog Inc. for over six years, working on various videos for non-profit organizations like the Ford Foundation. Many of these videos document educational reform initiatives in inner city areas, through programs such as GEAR UP and Project GRAD. Her first



documentary, **FEBRUARY ONE**, had its world premiere screening at the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival last April; the film has also screened at the Nashville, Telluride Indie, Key West, Memphis and Asheville film festivals and the IFP Film Market in New York. It was awarded the Human Rights Award at the River Run Film Festival, Winston-Salem and received the first annual Global Peace Film Festival Award, presented in Orlando, Florida. Her new film, *Mobilizing the Poor: Launching the War on Poverty* continues the work she started in **FEBRUARY ONE**, by exploring the second phase of the fight for equality, a more subtle fight against economic and educational inequity.

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

Independent Lens is an Emmy Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 P.M. on PBS. Hosted by Susan Sarandon, the acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of their independent producers. **Independent Lens** features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community or moment in history, which prompted Nancy Franklin to write in *The New Yorker*: "Watching **Independent Lens**... is like going into an independent bookstore—you don't always find what you were looking for but you often find something you didn't even know you wanted." Presented by ITVS, the series is supported by interactive companion websites, and national publicity and community outreach campaigns. Further information about the series is available at www.pbs.org/independentlens. **Independent Lens** is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts.

ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series **Independent Lens** on Tuesday nights at 10 P.M. on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting www.itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American People.

ABOUT PBS

PBS is a private, nonprofit media enterprise that serves the nation's 349 public noncommercial television stations, reaching nearly 90 million people each week through on-air and online content. Bringing diverse viewpoints to television and the Internet, PBS provides high-quality documentary and dramatic entertainment, and consistently dominates the most prestigious award competitions. PBS is the leading provider of educational materials for K-12 teachers, and offers a broad array of educational services for adult learners. PBS' premier kids' TV programming and Web site, PBS KIDS Online (pbskids.org), continue to be parents' and teachers' most trusted learning environments for children. More information about PBS is available at pbs.org, one of the leading dot-org Web sites on the Internet, averaging more than 30 million unique visits and 380 million page views per month in 2004. PBS is headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia.