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ITVS ANNOUNCES DEPARTURE OF JIM SOMMERS, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF CONTENT

(SAN FRANCISCO, CA, APRIL 27, 2026) — ITVS announced today that its longtime Executive Vice President of Content, Jim Sommers, will depart the organization on May 8, 2026, after more than 25 years of leadership.

"It has been the honor of my career to serve this extraordinary organization and to work alongside the dedicated staff and passionate filmmakers who uplift the diverse voices of our country and world," Sommers said. "With an unwavering mission as our North Star, we navigated a ground shift in federal funding, emerging more relevant and necessary than ever."

Sommers joined ITVS in 2001 as the organization's inaugural national outreach and education director, helping to define an early model for public media engagement that connected documentary storytelling with community-based impact. Drawing from his experience as an independent filmmaker, Sommers was a founding member of ITVS' Community Connections Project, which helped pioneer a national approach to bring together local field organizers, community organizations, and public media stations, extending the reach of documentary films into communities across the country.

He led engagement strategies for landmark projects including *The New Americans*, and *A Lion in the House*, establishing a framework for using documentary film as a catalyst for civic dialogue and participation.

Over the course of his tenure, Sommers held a series of senior leadership roles, including vice president of broadcast and communications, senior vice president of content management, senior vice president of content, and ultimately executive vice president of content. In these roles, he provided institutional stewardship across programming, production, communications, and distribution, guiding ITVS through periods of growth and transformation, including the Emmy Award-winning series *Independent Lens*, ITVS' flagship series on PBS.

Sommers also led key programmatic initiatives that expanded representation and equity within public media, including *Women and Girls Lead*, *Global Voices*, *Diverse Muslim Voices*, and *Stories for Justice*. Across this work, he was an unwavering champion for independent filmmakers and for broadening who gets to tell stories and whose stories are accessible to all Americans.

Throughout his career, Sommers has been a champion of diversity and inclusion, with a particular commitment to advancing representation within the disability community and strengthening an



internal culture aligned with ITVS' public service mission. He helped lead a partnership with FWD-Doc to analyze ITVS funding data, which showed a marked rise in applicants with disabilities since 2015, underscoring both growing participation and the need to better understand and remove persistent barriers to access in the field.

During his tenure, Jim oversaw a period of record scale and critical success for ITVS. He supported the production and distribution of more than 1,000 award-winning documentaries and docuseries for premier public media strands, including *Independent Lens*, *POV*, *Frontline*, and *American Masters*.

Under his leadership, Jim greenlit hundreds of culturally defining works such as the Academy Award-nominated *The Invisible War*, *I Am Not Your Negro*, *Abacus: Small Enough to Jail*, and *Minding the Gap*. These films have collectively earned numerous Emmys, Peabody Awards, and Oscar nominations and represent over \$140 million in funding, produced in partnership with vital organizations such as the National Multicultural Alliance, Firelight Media, Kartemquin Films, WNET, WGBH, and PBS.

"Through 20 years of inclusive leadership, Jim ensured that our mission wasn't just reflected in our films, but in everything we do as an organization," said Carrie Lozano, CEO and president of ITVS. "Jim possesses the rare ability to balance operational and editorial excellence with strategic foresight, which ensured that every move uplifted the field of independent filmmakers. We are grateful for his exemplary commitment and stewardship."

About ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) is the largest co-producer of independent documentaries in the United States. For more than 30 years the San Francisco non-profit has funded and partnered with documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning titles and premieres them on our Emmy® Award-winning PBS series, INDEPENDENT LENS. ITVS titles reach audiences across PBS, WORLD, and NETA, with streaming access available on digital platforms including the PBS app and the PBS Documentaries channel on YouTube. ITVS is funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Acton Family Giving, Ford Foundation, Jonathan Logan Family Foundation, Artemis Rising Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, Park Foundation, Brandt Jackson Foundation, the deNovo Initiative, and RandomGood Foundation. Additional support has been provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. For more information, visit itvs.org

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