

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 7, 2022

**Contacts**

Jordan Lawrence for *Ken Burns*

[jordan\\_lawrence@dkcnews.com](mailto:jordan_lawrence@dkcnews.com)

Seth Nelson for *The Better Angels Society*

[seth@frontwoodstrategies.com](mailto:seth@frontwoodstrategies.com)



**THE BETTER ANGELS SOCIETY ANNOUNCES 2022 BETTER ANGELS LAVINE  
FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS**

**Washington, DC – March 7, 2022** – Today, The Better Angels Society announced this year's recipients of the Better Angels Lavine Fellowship, a program for promising filmmakers who are telling stories that focus on America's diversity. The Fellows are selected from the pool of applicants to the Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film who demonstrate significant potential.

The recipients are *THE LAST PHILADELPHIA* (directed by John Carstarphen), *GARDEN CITY KANSAS* (directed by Robert Hurst), *A LONG MARCH* (directed by Tamara Botkin), *THE PHILADELPHIA ELEVEN* (directed by Margo Guernsey), *A TASTE OF HEAVEN: THE GOSPEL OF RAYMOND MYLES* (directed by Leo Sacks), and *BUFFALO SOLDIERS: FIGHTING ON THE TWO FRONTS* (directed by Dru Holley).

In 2020, the Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film was expanded to include The Better Angels Lavine Fellowship. Each receives support and mentorship as they work on their films.

"We live in a turbulent time," said **Ken Burns**. "There's never been a better moment to lift up and reflect diverse stories from history to provide a greater perspective on what we're experiencing now. Documentary filmmakers help us understand our common history, see one another, and celebrate what makes us similar and different. I am very grateful to Jonathan and Jeannie Lavine and The Better Angels Society for providing a pathway to bring filmmakers from all backgrounds to the table and recognizing that diverse perspectives are integral to telling the breadth of our country's history."

"As we enter our second year with the Better Angels Lavine Fellowship, we are honored to provide avenues to diverse stories by supporting diverse filmmakers," said **Jeannie and Jonathan Lavine, who provided the funding to The Better Angels Society to endow this fellowship through the Crimson Lion/Lavine Family Foundation**. "There's a great hunger for understanding the past right now, and we need compelling history stories that are grounded in research. The documentaries selected through this fellowship allow us to engage with the past in a way that is gripping and enlightening. They also spark conversations that are critical to how we understand the present. This fellowship opens up resources and brings a community of expert filmmakers to those promising filmmakers who apply for the Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film." Jeannie Lavine has served on a number of national boards including The Better Angels Society's Board of Directors. Jonathan Lavine is the Co-Managing Partner of Bain Capital, a Co-Chair of the Trustees of Columbia University, and Chair Emeritus of City Year.

**THE LAST PHILADELPHIA** explores what it was like for Black Philadelphians who came of age during the nation's Bicentennial in 1976, and how those turbulent times shaped their view of what it means to be an American.

**GARDEN CITY KANSAS** tells the history of a town on the High Plains of Kansas that has grown through continuous waves of migration. The film explores the historical and contemporary debates over immigration, and a militia-inspired bomb plot at a Muslim housing complex – foiled by a conspirator's change of heart.

**A LONG MARCH** follows three Filipino-American veterans as they trace their paths from war to

erasure by the U.S. Government, marching from an obscured history to the Federal courts, right up to the steps of Congress in search of promises denied.

**THE PHILADELPHIA ELEVEN** tells the story of the eleven women who became Episcopal priests against the rules in 1974. The largely archival journey, with parallels to today, shows how these women created a blueprint for institutional change.

**A TASTE OF HEAVEN: THE GOSPEL OF RAYMOND MYLES** tells the story of Raymond Myles, the Gospel Genius of New Orleans. More than a sensational entertainer, he was also a transformative schoolteacher and a catalyst for change in the Church -- until his shocking murder, on the cusp of stardom, in the projects he could not leave behind.

**BUFFALO SOLDIERS: FIGHTING ON THE TWO FRONTS** recounts the history of Black men seeking better lives in the U.S. Army after the Civil War. Their service during the Western expansion and ensuing wars created a laudatory yet complex legacy as they battled wars on two fronts — the enemy and the racism of the country they served.

“Historical documentaries help educate, engage, and provoke thoughtful discussion, making our democracy stronger and our fellow citizens wiser,” said **Courtney Chapin, Executive Director of The Better Angels Society**. “We are proud to have established the The Better Angels Lavine Fellowship to support this group of promising documentarians who have demonstrated the potential for excellence in telling stories that focus on America’s diversity.”

Areas of individualized support provided to fellows include reviewing film cuts; post-production budgeting, copyright and trademark advice; distribution and outreach strategies; music licensing; developing strategic partnerships; effective use of social media; and sourcing and licensing (including fair use) of archival material.

In addition to one-on-one advice, the fellowship organizes and hosts group workshops, with presentations from experts and an opportunity for the fellows to ask questions and learn from one another as well as the expert advisers.

Previous Better Angels Lavine Fellowship recipient FANNIE LOU HAMER'S AMERICA (Directed by Joy Elaine Davenport) recently premiered on the 10th season PBS's *America ReFramed* after receiving critical support and advice from expert advisors provided through the fellowship.

All applicants to the Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film are automatically considered for next year's Better Angels Lavine Fellowship.

Last week, The Better Angels Society and Library of Congress announced that entries are being accepted for the fourth annual Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film. To be eligible for the award, films must be submitted by June 1, 2022 and meet several criteria, most notably films must be late-stage documentaries with a running time of 50 minutes or longer focused on American history. For more information about the submission guidelines, visit [www.thebetterangelsociety.org](http://www.thebetterangelsociety.org).

###

### **About Ken Burns**

Ken Burns has been making documentary films for over forty years. Since the Academy Award nominated BROOKLYN BRIDGE in 1981, Ken has gone on to direct and produce some of the most acclaimed historical documentaries ever made, including THE CIVIL WAR; BASEBALL; JAZZ; THE WAR; THE NATIONAL PARKS: AMERICA'S BEST IDEA; THE ROOSEVELTS: AN INTIMATE HISTORY; JACKIE ROBINSON; THE VIETNAM WAR; and COUNTRY MUSIC. Future film projects include BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, AMERICA AND THE HOLOCAUST, THE AMERICAN BUFFALO, LEONARDO DA VINCI, THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, EMANCIPATION TO EXODUS, and LBJ & THE GREAT SOCIETY, among others. Ken's films have been honored with dozens of major awards, including sixteen Emmy Awards, two Grammy Awards and two Oscar nominations; and in September of 2008, at the News & Documentary Emmy Awards, Ken was honored by the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

### **About The Better Angels Society**

The Better Angels Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating Americans about their history through documentary film. Their mission is to educate, engage and provoke thoughtful discussion among people of every political persuasion and ideology. They work to ensure historically significant films are completed, broadcast, promoted, and shared in ways that reach and inform as many people as possible through robust educational and civic outreach. The Society is currently raising funds for films in production and planned over the next ten years.

The Better Angels Society is also working to ensure that the next generation of documentary filmmakers, inspired by Ken Burns and his team, receive the education, mentoring, training, and support they need to continue his legacy.

### **About The Crimson Lion/Lavine Family Foundation**

Jeannie and Jonathan Lavine established the Crimson Lion/Lavine Family Foundation to focus a significant portion of their philanthropic efforts toward leveling the playing field for individuals and families. The Foundation works to address pressing social challenges in the areas of education, community and public service, health and welfare, and discrimination and poverty. The Foundation supports the multi-disciplinary efforts of organizations that serve to strengthen society through research, innovation, public policy, direct service, and advocacy.