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**For Immediate Release**

## **WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL FILM AND ARTS FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES ITS 2010 DATES IN CELEBRATION OF ITS 5<sup>TH</sup> YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

**MIAMI, FL** — The Women's International Film and Arts Festival will be celebrating its 5th anniversary from March 25th – April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010 in Miami, Florida. The Women's International Film & Arts Festival (WIFF) is a unique, cultural event featuring films, visual and performance arts and other artistic expressions by women. It is one of only two film festivals in the Southeastern United States specifically dedicated to women, recognizing their brilliance and accomplishments. Film entries for this festival have been extended to December 7th 2009. The Host hotel for the festival is the Opera Suites and Marina hotel on 1750 North Bayshore Drive, Miami, FL 33132. The festival will be held at various locations throughout South Florida.

Founded by Yvonne McCormack- Lyons in 2004, the Women's International Film and Arts Festival is held annually during Women's History month. The event is designed to celebrate women and to help them realize their dreams, visions and voices. Throughout the past four years, WIFF has received more than 2,000 films from more than 60 countries such as Brazil, Chile, France, Taiwan, Germany, Mexico, Ghana, Egypt, Australia, Peru, New Zealand, Poland, Japan, Dubai, and of course films from the U.S., including our very own South Florida. Some films have received Emmy & Oscar nominations & Awards.

"We're really looking forward to our 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary event as we celebrate this special milestone year and continue to provide opportunities for women's issues and visions to be heard on an international level," said McCormack-Lyons.

The Festival has garnered unwavering support of many of the most prominent women in the industry and South Florida. Notable mentions include Founding Honorary Chair Ms. Ruby Dee, Emmy, Grammy & Golden Globe Award Winning Actress and 2010 Honorary Chair Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, US Congresswoman.

Some of the festival attendees have included 2007 Oscar nominee ("Babel") Adriana Barraza, 2008 Golden Globe Winner ("American Gangster") Ruby Dee, "The Breakfast Club's" Alley Sheedy, international performing artist Lucrecia, Nighttime TV host Chelsea Handler and many more. Films submitted include all genres and lengths (documentaries, short films, biographies, animated films, narrative features, etc.) are primarily directed, produced or edited by women. Some submissions are also made by men, but address a women's issue, perspective or document a woman in history.

### **ABOUT THE WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

The overarching mission of WIFF is to provide year-round programming which bring women artists from all over the world to South Florida to explore and engage in dialogue about issues concerning women. With women representing only 7% of film directors, every effort should be made to enhance the opportunity for women's voices to be heard, and to present a wider range of roles and identity choices for women. Through panel discussions, workshops, and symposia, WIFF's goals include empowering women of all ages to see themselves in a broader context. To invest in the future, WIFF has created the WIFF "Reel Girls, Real Women" program. This program empowers girls-at-risk and with low self-esteem by teaching them media literacy. The girls gain confidence as they produce short documentary films of their own.

## **FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT**

Yvonne McCormack-Lyons has spent the past 20 years in the fields of communications and women based arts and culture programs. She is truly international. Mrs. McCormack-Lyons is a Canadian citizen, a second generation Jamaican, who was born in England and raised in Canada. A graduate of York University Mrs. McCormack-Lyons has been spearheading the award winning Women's International Film & Arts Festival for the past four years. She oversees the annual selection of more than 500 films, develops arts and film programs empowering women, the media literacy/film education program for adolescent girls and oversees the international festival which occurs annually in March.

With a degree in broadcast journalism and production, she spent a number of years reporting and anchoring a weekly television program in Washington, D.C., which highlighted events around the public school system. She was recruited to relocate to Miami to produce and anchor a weekly television program which served both the local audience in Miami as well as in the Caribbean through the West Indian International Network in Miami and the Caribbean Broadcasting Union in Guyana, WI.

She went on to serve as Public Information and Marketing Directors for the State of Florida and Miami-Dade County, where she lead teams of communication specialists and marketers to promote arts programs such as music and dance concerts, international sporting facilities and events such as the Junior Olympics and the Nasdaq 100 tennis tournament, as well as local community events such as art & music festivals. Her work included: advertising, film production, television production, corporate sponsorships, collateral production and much more.

She currently sits on the Miami-Dade County Film & Entertainment Advisory Committee, The Broward County Cultural Executives Committee and has received a number of national awards for her work in communications and arts. She has been invited internationally to speak on areas concerning women in the arts, women and the media and films about women, advertising, film production, events planning, digital designs and broadcast communication.

The Women's International Film and Arts Festival was honored with the "*Best Miami Film Festival*" in 2007 by the Miami New Times. With women representing only 7% of film directors, the Women's International Film and Arts Festival is making every effort to increase this number and help enhance the opportunity for women's voices to be heard, and to present a wider range of roles and identity choices for women in this billion dollar industry.

To learn more about the Women's International Film and Arts Festival, please log on to [www.womensfilmfest.com](http://www.womensfilmfest.com)

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