

SCAD Student Films Accepted for Consideration in 2011 Gray's Reef Ocean Film Festival

For Immediate Release

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Savannah, Ga., Aug 3 2011—Nine short environmental documentaries produced by Savannah College of Art and Design students have been accepted for screening at the 2011 Gray's Reef Ocean film Festival. Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary will host the eighth annual Ocean film Festival September 22-24 in Savannah. The free festival screens award-winning ocean documentaries to promote stewardship of the world ocean resources.

The nine student films will be competing for the Dr. Robert O. Levitt Award for Emerging Filmmakers.

Levitt, a Savannah internist, loved SCUBA diving. He was a pioneer in dive medicine and taught SCUBA for many years and wrote the first diving instruction text books used by the YMCA's diving instructors.

Levitt was inspired by undersea explorer and filmmaker Jacques Cousteau and by Lloyd Bridges' early television show, "Sea Hunt" to carry on his own diving adventures, favoring the West Indies and Mexico. He spent time diving with the Cousteau family.

While practicing medicine in Chicago, Levitt became involved with the Shed Aquarium. He was a founder of "Our World Underwater," a consumer oriented dive show with an ocean film component. As president of the Coastal Georgia Archaeological Society, he brought the International Society for Historical Archaeology's Conference for Historical and Underwater Archaeology to Savannah. At that meeting, Savannah's residents were the first to see Bob Ballard's original underwater footage of the ship *Titanic*.

Kathryn Levitt carries on Levitt's interest in and concern for the ocean world today with her continued support of the Gray's Reef Ocean Film Festival. Her

support allows the Gray's Reef Ocean Film Festival to offer first, second and third place prizes designed to help the student filmmakers further their underwater filmmaking careers.

The student films contending for the Levitt Award this year are:

Living Fossils, Patrick Gilmore, producer; *The Marsh Canvas*, Chris Wiederman producer; *Sea Turtles*, *A Second Chance*, Taylor Jenkins, producer; *Whose Wilderness Is It?*, Gabriella Garcia-Pardo, producer; *Saving the Savannah*, Emily Freeman, producer; *Unknown Colony Killer*, Danika Burtt, producer; *The Tree Climbers*; Jackson Notier, producer; *Cienaga*, Sebastian Pinzon' producer; and *Ray vs. Bay: the threat of the Cownose Ray*; Bess Johnson, producer.

The films will be screened at noon Saturday September 24 at Trustees Theater.

A complete schedule and up to the minute 2011 Gray's Reef Ocean Film Festival information will be posted on our website:

http://graysreef.noaa.gov/news/features/2011/film_festival_2011/welcome.html

as well as on our Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ocean-Film-Festival-Savannah-Grays-Reef/117429584976075>

Links to film clips will be posted on Facebook as they become available.