



Doc on GLBT Elders Released

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Nine years ago, Michael Jacoby, director of the just-out documentary "Ten More Good Years" met two New York City-based elders, Mel and Lisa, both looking for new friendships in their later years. Jacoby was reluctant at first, he says now, and wondered why they would pick him to befriend.

"But after a bit of arm-twisting, I put my concerns aside and discovered that Mel and Lisa offered a unique companionship I could not find in friendships with people my own age," says Jacoby. "Not only did I have two new pals, I also had two mentors helping me navigate in waters that once frightened me. They allowed me to better understand myself as a homosexual, an artist, a New Yorker, but most importantly as a person who could see beyond the lines on their faces."

From this friendship grew what has become the documentary, "Ten More Good Years," which aims to bridge the generation gap and serve as an educational tool so that younger GLBT people can better understand not only what older GLBT people went through to help pave the way for us, but also what obstacles they currently face.

The doc's message, says Jacoby: If we embraced people of all ages, would a younger generation feel more compelled to try to put an end to these injustices?

"My hope is that by telling the stories of four wonderful individuals and the brave few who are advocates for elders, the viewer will see that ageism is merely a fear of the unknown and that we can easily overcome it," he says. "As a gay man in 2008, I feel lucky to have had the opportunity to pay homage to the men and women who took the first bold steps in the LGBT civil rights movement; who made it possible for me to even make this film. From them I learned that the fight for LGBT equality is far from over, and that many of the elders we owe so much to are the ones suffering the most."

Compelled to create the documentary, Jacoby (who credits himself as the film's director/producer/editor/story/camera/sound guy) shot the entire film single camera and funded its production largely by maxing out his credit cards, and asking friends for donations and gifts.

However difficult funding the production was, its success is largely due to the individual stories Jacoby chose to tell, including the stories of Jack Ogg and his partner Don, who was diagnosed with cancer, died, and left Jack to fend for himself without Don's pension or Social Security to help pay for everyday expenses; and Miss Major, who has been an activist for transgender rights for more than 35 years.

"The stories told through 'Ten More Good Years' beautifully capture an important slice of history of the LGBT community, while it splices that with a crystal clear view of the future — lighting the way with regard to what it means to age in the LGBT community," said Robert G. Stein, American Society on Aging president and CEO. "I've always felt that adults learn best through compelling

story-telling, and this production features one fascinating story after another, each with its own profound lesson."

"Ten More Good Years" also includes interviews with gerontologists, social service workers, lawyers from the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and **senior strategists from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**. The documentary also investigates the process and outcome of the 2005 White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA); an event scheduled every 10 years to guide national policies on aging.

"Ten More Good Years" is a one-of-a-kind documentary that challenges all of us to rethink the way we perceive aging," says Jacoby. "I hope that with the release of the DVD, everyone will have an opportunity to discover the amazing elders who share their stories in the film. I'm sure that viewers, whether straight or gay, will find the film both enlightening and inspiring. And for anyone working with or around older adults, the film will provide an excellent educational tool."

"Ten More Good Years" aired on the Sundance Channel in June and July of 2008 and will premiere on Logo on Sept. 13. The film has screened at international film festivals in London and San Francisco, with upcoming screenings planned at the Vancouver International LGBT Film Festival, the Nigah Film Festival in New Delhi, India, and The Washington, D.C., International LGBT Film Festival.