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FILM AND STAGE ACTOR/DIRECTOR KAREN ALLEN SCHEDULED TO SPEAK AT SONOMA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT MEDIA ARTS PROGRAM SCREENING AT 25TH ANNIVERSARY FILM FESTIVAL MARCH 23-27, 2022

Sonoma, CA January 26, 2022—Film and stage star Karen Allen will be a special industry guest at SIFF's 25th Anniversary Film Festival. While in town for the festival, she will speak at the first of two screenings with Sonoma Valley High School filmmaking students at this year's Media Arts Program Student Showcase, a compilation of student short films. The first screening is for Sonoma Valley High School students only on Wednesday, March 23 at 9 AM at Sebastiani Theatre.

"We welcome festival friend Karen Allen for our 25th celebration," said Kevin W. McNeely, SIFF Artistic Director. "She has enjoyed a long and successful career in film, stage and television, and worked with some of the best directors of our generation. Our students in the Media Arts Program will be able to learn so much from her given her rich career as an actor, director and acting teacher. We are so pleased she can join us here in Sonoma."

Best known for her role as Marion Ravenswood in Steven Spielberg's *INDIANA JONES AND THE RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*, a role reprised in *INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL*, Allen has 65 film and television credits, including roles in iconic films such as John Landis' *NATIONAL LAMPOON'S ANIMAL HOUSE* (her first role), Woody Allen's *MANHATTAN*, John Carpenter's *STARMAN*, Richard Donner's *SCROOGED*, Paul Newman's *THE GLASS MENAGERIE* and Spike Lee's *MALCOLM X*. In 2019, she was nominated for the Independent Spirit Award for Best Female Lead for her role in Tom Quinn's *COLEWELL* and the film was nominated for the Independent Spirit John Cassavetes Award. The film screened at SIFF 2019 with Allen in attendance.

Her stage work includes playing Helen Keller in William Gibson's *MONDAY AFTER THE MIRACLE* on Broadway, and she is a longtime collaborator on works performed at the Actor's Studio, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Berkshire Theatre Festival and the Westport Country Playhouse.

Allen is also an accomplished fiber artist with a line of clothing and accessories (Karen Allen Fiber Arts at <https://karenallen-fiberarts.com>). In 2010 she received an honorary doctorate from the Fashion Institute of Technology, where she studied as a teen before turning her attention to acting. Allen teaches acting at Bard College at Simon's Rock in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

"I'm delighted to return to the Sonoma Film Festival for its 25th Anniversary," said Karen Allen. "I shot a film in Sonoma in 1982 with Alan Parker directing and Diane Keaton and Albert Finney titled "Shoot the Moon" and have

been in love with Sonoma ever since. My week at the festival a few years ago was filled with wonderful films, meeting extraordinary people, and delicious food and wine!”

Sonoma International Film Festival was pivotal in the inception of the Sonoma Valley High School Student Media Arts Program started in 2002. In the 20 years since it began, SIFF, and partner Sonoma Valley Education Fund, have given more than \$725,000 to the program, including equipping Sonoma’s only high school with a state-of-the-art studio and ongoing financial resources. The program is taught by longtime teacher Peter Hansen.

There are two screenings of the Media Arts Program Student Showcase, pending capacity limits. The first showcase, for students only, is on Wednesday, March 23 at 9 AM at Sebastiani Theatre. The second is on Sunday, March 27 at 3 PM at Andrews Hall and is free to the public, pending capacity limits. All Covid safety procedures will be followed; including proof of vaccination and mask protocols.

“The students of Sonoma Valley High School's Media Arts program are so excited to have Karen Allen come speak to our aspiring filmmakers and actors,” said teacher Peter Hansen. “Her films are timeless, generational and relatable.”

About Sonoma International Film Festival

The Sonoma International Film Festival is a 501(c)3 corporation dedicated to promoting independent film, supporting filmmakers around the world, and inspiring film lovers. Blending a program of international film, food, wine and fun, SIFF hosts its annual festival each March, as well as year-round live and virtual events including SIFF Summerfest live, and SIFF Saturdays, monthly virtual films screened on the last Saturday of every month.

SIFF’s signature initiative--the Media Arts Program started at Sonoma Valley High School in 2002--introduces students to the process of storytelling and provides the resources for them to create films. SIFF has granted more than \$725,000 to the program since its inception.

Sonoma International Film Festival celebrates 25 years March 23-27, 2022. Passes are on sale now at sonomafilmfest.org.

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