

Westlake Village couple to show their prize-winning documentary, 'Reconciliation: Mandela's Miracle'

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"Reconciliation: Mandela's Miracle," an award-winning documentary by Westlake Village residents Michael Henry Wilson and Carole J. Wilson, will be screened, followed by a question-and-answer session with the filmmakers Saturday.

The film evaluates the political, moral and spiritual legacy of Nelson Mandela, who is known for leading his nation in the early 1990s to a peaceful dismantling of apartheid and the establishment of a multi-racial democracy. Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years as a leader of the militant African National Congress until his release in 1990. Mandela then took part in years of negotiations, which led to the dismantling of apartheid and his election as president in 1994 in the nation's first multiracial elections.

"Nelson Mandela was once considered a terrorist by the apartheid government," said Carole Wilson, producer of the film along with her husband, the film's writer, producer and director.

Their film, which won the 2010 award for Best Documentary at the Hollywood Film Festival, details events leading up to what South Africans have coined "Mandela's Miracle," a strategy coined by South Africans that averted a civil war.

The filmmakers showcase the perspective of peacemakers who brought about the creation of the Rainbow Nation, including Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, former president F.W. de Klerk, long-imprisoned rights activist Ahmed Kathrada, Mandela's daughter Zinzi, and Francois Pienaar, captain of the Springboks national rugby team that won the 1995 Rugby World Cup and helped bring about a spirit of national reconciliation.

Additionally, "we visit Clint Eastwood on the set of 'Invictus,'" Carole Wilson said in reference to the film directed by Eastwood that portrays how Mandela saw the World Cup competition as an opportunity to set aside racial conflicts and foster a spirit of national unity.

The film also features "spectacular aerial shots of Robben Island and Cape Town, and a music score written by Thomas 'Take' Wilson and Kripa Julian Jones, as well as

Michael Wilson said he was inspired by the Dalai Lama to make the film and that the project took 10 years to come together. “By then, I knew that the South African story of reconciliation touched people in every sphere of life, from the townships to the halls of power — that it challenged the victims of apartheid as much as the perpetrators of violence,” he wrote for the film’s website.

Carole Wilson added that the goal of the documentary “is to show it widely in theaters, on television, in schools, libraries and DVD, so people remember a history that should not be forgotten, and to become inspired by the example of Mandela and other peacemakers — to know that forgiveness and reconciliation is possible, even in the most horrendous situations.”



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