



"Italian Americans and Federal Hill" is big Surprise of Film Festival

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The film "Italian Americans and Federal Hill" surprised festival workers by attracting a crowd hundreds larger than expected despite prior exposure and the DVD release. The crowd voted the film 1st place for best documentary out of 320 films screened.

PR9.NET August 21, 2007 - Providence, Rhode Island - The 11th Annual Rhode Island International Film Festival (RIIFF) has named "Italian Americans and Federal Hill" the 1st Place, Audience Choice Award winner for Best Documentary out of 2,491 entries submitted and 320 films screened during this year's festival.

Produced and directed by Jonathan Raben, the film premiered late last year, and received a four star rating from Providence Journal film critic, Michael Janusonis, a five star rating from Frances Syner (Federal Hill Gazette), "thumbs up" from the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF News) and was heralded as far away as Italy by the Newsitalia Press. Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI) Italy's National Broadcaster was at the theater to cover the film premiere event and the Annotico Report featured the story in his column worldwide.

With so much prior exposure and the DVD already available, festival officials and workers did not expect a large turnout. Even RIIFF's own award ceremony presentations conflicted with the screening. However lines formed early for the film and Columbus Theater owner Jon Berberian, festival workers and officials expressed great surprise when "Italian Americans and Federal Hill" had hundreds more in attendance than expected with the biggest crowd of all films shown during the festival.

The film relates the history, traditions, challenges and successes of Italian immigrants throughout the United States. The hardships and prejudices they endured are similar to that of all immigrants today who come with different cultures, traditions and languages.

The Audience Choice Award to be presented is named for the late Viola M. Marshall, an arts supporter and a founding member of the Flickers Arts Collaborative which created and produces the RIIFF.

"Italian Americans and Federal Hill" is the first film made entirely in Rhode Island by and with Rhode Islanders that has experienced commercial success. It is available on DVD in a number of stores including Borders and Barnes & Noble. Other outlets are developing across the United States, Italy and on websites such as www.italianamericansandfederalhill.net. The Rhode Island International Film Festival site is at www.riiff.org.

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