

MACGILLIVRAY FREEMAN FILMS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Billion Dollar Breakthrough! Box Office Benchmark!

IMAX Film pioneer - Greg MacGillivray – becomes first documentary filmmaker to reach this HISTORIC milestone

LAGUNA BEACH, Ca. (September 2, 2010) - Pioneering giant-screen film producer/director **Greg MacGillivray** has joined an elite club of filmmakers whose films have cumulatively earned more than \$1 billion in ticket sales at the worldwide box office. Approximately 100 feature filmmakers have attained this level of box office success in the history of cinema according to industry trackers, but MacGillivray is **the first documentary filmmaker to join the group**, a benchmark celebrated by the entertainment industry's trade journal, *Daily Variety*, in a special feature now hitting newsstands.

Daily Variety's Iain Blair writes, "The film business is full of showy sprinters: filmmakers and movies that flash by as they ring up impressive box office numbers, only to leave little of substance in their wake. Then there are the dedicated long-distance specialists, like Greg MacGillivray, whose thought-provoking documentaries – including *Everest*, *To The Arctic*, *To Fly!* and *The Living Sea* – play for years, even decades at a time. These giant screen labors of love may not have made MacGillivray a household name, but over the past four decades, they've entertained and educated millions around the globe, and recently – in a hare-and-tortoise scenario Hollywood should envy – quietly passed \$1 billion in box office. While most filmmakers would be ecstatic about reaching that milestone, MacGillivray is not one of those people. "I'm actually a little embarrassed, as it's the educational value of our films and the kinds of changes they've helped bring about that are the most important thing to me," says MacGillivray, 65, who co-founded MacGillivray Freeman Films (MFF) back in the '60s with partner Jim Freeman."

Education is the main goal, not just entertainment

Beginning with their first documentary films more than 40 years ago, the MFF team's objective has always been to create meaningful, memorable learning experiences conveyed through intense and beautiful images. Since the early '70s, MacGillivray has produced and/or directed 36 giant-screen IMAX format films that celebrate science and the natural world – making him **the world's most prolific producer of giant-screen films** – as well as 22 other smaller format documentaries. More than 250 million people have been educated by his films in theatres and perhaps another 100 million in home video and television versions.

MFF has long worked closely with 125 of the world's science, space and natural history institutions to bring its immersive learning experiences to a global audience in some 32 countries. Because the IMAX Theatres are so technically advanced and costly to build, giant-screen theatres have historically retained the lion's share of gross ticket sales – approximately 85%. So more than \$850 million of the \$1 billion in box office returns has helped museum theatres meet their other educational objectives – supporting curatorial work and educational exhibits. "We are beholden to the museum theatres which have an average of seven employees promoting our films and conveying their educational messages. We're delighted to be an active, entertaining, attractive and profit-producing part of their educational mission," says MacGillivray.

As printed in *Daily Variety*, **John Mackey**, president of Discovery Place in Charlotte, N.C., reports that MacGillivray “listens a lot to our needs and is very committed to our educational goals. He’ll screen a new work in progress, give us a rigorous survey and then act on our feedback.” Mackey, who oversaw the building of the Discovery Place IMAX Theater in 1992, adds that MacGillivray’s films “have always been the most popular, and he always produces excellent educational materials and guides to complement his projects.” **Jennifer Grant Warner**, senior VP and chief programming officer at Atlanta’s Fernbank Museum of Natural History, notes that its IMAX Theater – “and Greg’s films in particular” – play a “key role” in funding the museum’s operations. His films are always top-attended and help us fulfill our educational mission because he always puts the science first, and that is so important for us,” she says.

A unique Laguna Beach company of 25 people modeled after Hollywood studios

Much like George Lucas in Marin County, MFF built a small, specialized and dedicated team of artists and filmmakers in the small town of Laguna Beach, 60 miles south of Hollywood. Over the past 45 years, the company has been able to focus without the distractions of the big city, becoming efficient producers of high-quality, innovative films. “Greg MacGillivray delivers. Thirty-six profitable giant-screen films over thirty-five years is an outstanding accomplishment. His remarkably consistent string of successful films is rare, even in the world of feature films. Not many film producers can match it,” said **Mike Lutz**, Senior Vice President for Business Development at MFF.

Greg MacGillivray’s groundbreaking educational giant-screen films have received many industry accolades, including two **Academy Award nominations** for Best Documentary Short Subject for *The Living Sea* and *Dolphins*. The giant-screen industry has honored him with “Best Film of the Year” four times and three of his films have been inducted into the IMAX Hall of Fame. He is widely respected for his acclaimed series of environmental films, including *Hurricane on the Bayou* and *Grand Canyon Adventure: River at Risk 3D*.

“IMAX Theatre films don’t always receive the recognition they deserve as artful, technically demanding documentaries that far surpass the audience reach of most conventional documentaries,” said **Bob Harman**, Director of Distribution at MFF. “Commercially, conventional documentaries are dwarfed by IMAX Theatre films. On the list of top-grossing documentaries in all formats, based on worldwide box office returns, giant-screen films hold 7 of the top 10 positions.”

“Greg MacGillivray has made one of the most significant and long-lasting contributions to giant-screen filmmaking in the history of the medium,” said **Dr. Jeffrey Kirsch**, Executive Director of the **Reuben H. Fleet Science Center** in San Diego. “His documentary films have not only enriched the lives of hundreds of millions of people around the world, but their vast popularity has helped the giant-screen industry grow from a handful of IMAX Theatres in the mid 1970s into what it is today, a network of more than 350 theatres worldwide.”

“This is a remarkable milestone for a filmmaker who has always followed his heart and his love of adventure, science and the environment. His films have inspired millions to rediscover the beauty of their planet and helped keep the doors open at the world’s science centers and natural history museums where the films play,” said **Toby Mensforth**, Chairman of the **Giant Screen Cinema Association**. “Greg MacGillivray has always held himself to the highest standards of filmmaking, both as an artist and a technician. Perhaps no other documentary filmmaker has had a more meaningful and far-reaching impact.”

The history of MacGillivray Freeman Films

In the late 1960s, Greg MacGillivray formed MFF with his best friend and filmmaking business partner, Jim Freeman. The filmmaking pair first made a name for themselves with a series of ten

successful surfing documentaries including the landmark cult classic, *Five Summer Stories*. After making 22 various documentaries, with an estimated box office gross of \$7 million, MFF went on to photograph and direct second unit aerial sequences for *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* and *The Towering Inferno*, as well as surfing scenes for *Big Wednesday*. Stanley Kubrick also called on MacGillivray to direct and shoot the opening aerial sequence and other scenes for *The Shining*, which received an Academy Award nomination for Best Cinematography.

In 1974, MacGillivray and Freeman turned their attention to the new 15/70mm IMAX Theatre format. Their first giant-screen film, *To Fly!*, premiered at the Smithsonian Institution's new National Air and Space Museum in 1976 as the cornerstone of the museum's bicentennial celebration. Thirty-four years later, the film is still playing at the museum. **No ticketed film in the history of cinema has had such a long continuous run.** Unfortunately, Jim Freeman did not live to see the fruits of his labor. In 1976, he died tragically in a helicopter crash. MacGillivray kept Freeman's name on MFF as an enduring tribute to his artistry, leadership, and friendship.

A cameraman on all of the company's films for decades, **Brad Ohlund** learned his craft from MacGillivray and Freeman. Says Ohlund, "Jim Freeman was known as one of the top aerial cameramen in the USA. After he died, Greg carried on, becoming a master of aerial photography in his own right. He made superb aerial photography the visual trademark of MFF's giant-screen films. So even today, whenever I watch one of our new films, I still see a bit of Jim."

The enormous success of *To Fly!* was a harbinger of things to come. In 1998, MFF again made history. The company's blockbuster film *Everest* broke all giant screen box office records and by 2000 it became the **highest grossing documentary film of any format in cinema history**. But that was not MacGillivray's only big hit.

Top 5 Highest Grossing films produced by MacGillivray Freeman Films:

Everest – \$148 million (worldwide gross box office)
To Fly! – \$127 million
The Living Sea – \$103 million
Dolphins – \$90 million
To The Limit – \$76 million

The future: producing films that make a difference – iPhone to IMAX

All of this remarkable box office success enabled MacGillivray to follow another dream. In 2004, he and his wife Barbara formed the **MacGillivray Freeman Films Educational Foundation** to promote conservation of the environment and world heritage through giant-screen films and companion programming.

An ardent environmentalist, MacGillivray's personal mission is to produce at least 10 films about ocean and water conservation. He has already produced six, and he just began his most ambitious project yet, the \$35 million five-year global ocean initiative called *One World Ocean* that will include a 40-minute 3D IMAX Theatre film, a 90-minute 3D studio theatrical documentary, an 8-part network television series in 3D (all to be released in February to December, 2015), and a web series, thousands of social media programs, companion books, and more. Six different production teams will travel to all five oceans to 40 different locations to collect never-before-photographed wildlife. Says MacGillivray: "My dream for this newest series of films is to change the way people all across the world feel about this water planet we share. The health of the world's ocean has reached a critical stage. Many people don't realize what a severe impact our human population has brought and don't know what they can do to stop it. My job is to make people care enough to change their ways and take positive action. Using cross promotion, we're building an integrated

media campaign for *One World Ocean* to make it a powerful catalyst for that necessary change.” Adds producer, **Shaun MacGillivray**, “Our Academic Advisor to the film, Dr. Sylvia Earle, says that the next ten years will define our next 10,000 years. The moment to change our relationship with the ocean is now.”

Conservation is MacGillivray’s main mission: “Not only have I made films about the ocean, but I’ve largely funded them on my own, so I’m fully committed. In 100 years I want whales, dolphins and sharks to still be around. I want to leave my great-grandchildren an even healthier planet.”

This benchmark is a shared honor

Over the course of producing 58 documentary films in many formats, MFF has had the privilege of working with many talented collaborators. “I have been lucky enough to surround myself with a talented group of filmmakers who have worked with me for decades, most importantly **Stephen Judson**, who has brilliantly edited nearly all of our films and co-written many of them as well, and **Steve Wood**, whose film scores and musical arrangements are captivating and magical,” said MacGillivray. “The history of MFF has always been one of collaboration, and together we do our best to craft films that make a difference in the world.”

Sharing this benchmark with MacGillivray is a principal team of **Cinematographers** (Jim Freeman, Brad Ohlund, Jack Tankard, Ron Goodman, Howard Hall, Reed Smoot, Bob Cranston, Michael Brown, Gordon Brown), **Editors** (Steve Judson, Jim Foster, Dale Beldin, Matthew Muller, Rob Walker), **Composers** (Steve Wood, Basil Poledouris), **Writers** (Steve Judson, Jack Stephens, Jon Boorstin, Tim Cahill, Stephen Venables), **Executive Producers** (Chat Reynders, Tom Campion, Jim Thomas, Khalid Alireza, Harrison Smith, Paula Apsell, Suzanne Simpson, Jeff Kirsch), **Directors, Co-Directors and Co-Producers** (Jim Freeman, Steve Judson, Alec Lorimore, Mark Krenzien, David Breashears, Glen Pitre, Howard Hall, Michele Hall, Harrison Smith, Shaun MacGillivray, Jordi Llompарт, Francis Thompson, Mike Hoover, Derek Hart, Jeff Kirsch, Kathy Almon, Anne Marie Hammers, Sandra Stokes, Neal Allen, Jeff Blyth, Richie Gelfand and Dennis Earl Moore), **Special FX Artists** (Alan Markowitz, Tim Sassoon) and **Post-Production Experts** (David Keighley, Ken Teaney, Andrew deChristofaro). Other dedicated colleagues who have joined MacGillivray in making these influential films are as follows:

Don King	Peter Coleman	Ron Fricke	Rodney Taylor	Alex Spanos
Roger Holzberg	Richard Michelak	James Neihouse	Mark Olshaker	Karyn Noles Bewley
Miguel Angel Trujillo	Ralph Mendoza	Osha Gray Davidson	David Giro	Wes Skiles
Peter Kragh	Stephen Venables	Sean Phillips	Adam Moos	Dea Berberian
Tim Housel	Jason Rosenfield	Jill Osmon	Michael Graber	Tom Cowan
Neguine Sanani	Kelly Tyler	Robbie Huntoon	Bernat Aragones	Alexander Biner
Richard Bangs	Joe Jennings	White Oak Associates	Byron McKinney	Khalid Alireza
Mike Peralta	Craig Naylor	K2 Communications	Bill Reeve	Steve Dorand
Daniel May	Bob Kresser	BJ Worth	Patrick Williams	Hugh Renfro
Jan Baird	Bob Talbot	Michael Cudahy	Ryan Kresser	Michael Stearns
Paul Atkins	Stefan Lessard	Caroline Beteta	Paul Mockler	Peter Metzdorf
Christopher N. Palmer	Peter Parks	Audubon Nature Institute	National Science Foundation	

We apologize to anyone who was inadvertently omitted.

A complete MacGillivray Freeman Films filmography is available at www.macfreefilms.com.

For more information, please contact:

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