

For immediate release



***The Second Step* Takes Grand Prize at Banff Mountain Film Festival**

An inspirational film about a double leg amputee who defies physical barriers to achieve a personal goal has taken top honours at the 2002 Banff Mountain Film Festival. *The Second Step*, the story of Warren Macdonald's climb of Federation Peak in Tasmania, is the winner of the Grand Prize at the 27th annual festival. The film follows Macdonald — who lost both his legs in a 1997 climbing accident — on his epic 28-day trek to reach the peak.

"*The Second Step* is a very stirring and heartwarming film about achieving objectives against incredible odds," says film festival jury member Piers Handling. "This film reveals not only Macdonald's will to overcome physical barriers, but also his passion and commitment to protect the environment," adds fellow jury member Roger Payne.

The Second Step – Warren Macdonald's Epic Journey to Federation Peak was directed by Gary Caganoff and produced by Suzanne Davies for Kaganovich Productions/Part Animal Part Machine (Australia). The Grand Prize award of \$4,000 is co-sponsored by Leadership Development at The Banff Centre and Eagle Creek Travel Gear.

The 2002 Banff Mountain Film Festival jury included French alpinist and filmmaker Jean Afanassieff; director of the Cervino International Film Festival Valeriana Rosso; Bavarian filmmaker Gerhard Baur; director of the Toronto International Film Festival Piers Handling; and mountaineer Roger Payne, a director of the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation.

In perhaps the most surprising award at this year's festival, 15-year-old Daniel Kingsbury of Roberts Creek, British Columbia walked away with the award for **Best Film on Mountain Sports**. Kingsbury's film *The Essence of Adolescence* is a celebration of the exuberance of youth, as expressed through snowboarding, BMX biking and skateboarding. "An honest film which shows not only the jumps, but the failures too," says Gerhard Baur. "*The Essence of Adolescence* is youthful, quirky, spontaneous and energetic," says Piers Handling.

The Essence of Adolescence was directed and produced by Kingsbury for Khaos Productions (Canada). The award for Best Film on Mountain Sports is sponsored by Yamnuska Inc.

In other awards, *Vertical Frontier*, directed and produced by Kristi Denton Cohen for Peloton Productions (USA), took the **Alpine Club of Canada Award for Best Film on Climbing**. The documentary is a comprehensive look at the history of climbing in Yosemite National Park. "*Vertical Frontier* captures the spirit of American climbing," says Jean Afanassieff.

Rescue: The Cost of Risk, directed by Pierre-Antoine Hiroz and produced by Benoît Aymon, was awarded the prize for **Best Film on Mountain Culture**. “*Rescue: The Cost of Risk* is a well-structured, very intelligent film about the issue of mountain rescue,” says Piers Handling. The film was produced by Télévision Suisse Romande (TSR)/MC4 Production/ARTE G.E.I.E./Espace Production (Switzerland/France). The Best Film on Mountain Culture award is sponsored by Petzl.

The award for **Best Film on Mountain Environment** went to ***Cannibals and Crampons***, directed by Bruce Parry and Mark Anstice and produced by Ed Stobart for Ginger Productions (UK). It tells the story of a journey through the dense tropical jungle of New Guinea to climb a remote peak. “This is a simple film about travelling in harmony with the environment and people,” says Jean Afanassief.

Cannibals and Crampons also takes the **People’s Choice Award**, sponsored by The Hostel Shop, Calgary, Alberta and Ortovox. The award is voted on by the festival audience.

Front Range Freaks [Part 1]: Urban Ape, directed and produced by Peter Mortimer, was awarded **Best Short Mountain Film**. *Urban Ape* follows Timmy O’Neill as he scales buildings in downtown Denver and Boulder, Colorado. “This film has a wonderful sense of self-irony,” says Gerhard Baur. The award is sponsored by Mountain Equipment Co-Op.

Zacharias Kunuk’s *Atanarjuat* took the **Best Feature-Length Mountain Fiction Film** award, sponsored by Mountain Culture at The Banff Centre. Piers Handling praises the film for its “brilliant use of oral tradition to tell a primal story.” *Atanarjuat* was produced by Paul Apak Angilirq, Norman Cohn and Zacharias Kunuk for Iglolik Isuma Productions/NFB (Canada).

The jury also selected two films for **Special Jury Awards**:

WhiteTrax, Director/Producer: Sean White; Production Company: Black and White Productions (Canada). *White Trax* follows unicyclist Kris Holm as he rides moguls, snowboard parks and backcountry terrain. “This film includes fun and humour and also a subtle representation of challenge and consequence,” says Roger Payne.

Escape over the Himalayas — Tibet’s Children on Their Journey into Exile, Director: Zazie Blumencron; Producer: Golli Marboe; Production Company: Tellux Film Munich (Germany). “*Escape* examines an important issue in a sensitive way,” says Valeriana Rosso. “I was impressed by the courage of the filmmaker in making this film.”

A record-breaking 263 films from 31 countries were entered in this year’s Banff Mountain Film Festival competition. Forty-five finalist films were screened during the festival. The annual event, organized by Mountain Culture at The Banff Centre, also features world-renowned guest speakers, seminars on current mountain issues, an adventure trade fair, mountain art and craft sale, and a climbing wall.

Entry forms for the 2003 Banff Mountain Film Festival will be available in May 2003 on the festival’s Web site at www.banffmountainfestivals.ca

Mountain Culture at The Banff Centre promotes understanding and appreciation of the world's mountain places by creating opportunities for people to share — and find inspiration in — mountain experiences, ideas and visions.

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An electronic version of this media release and downloadable photos from the festival films are available at www.banffmountainfestivals.ca/media

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Eagle Creek Travel Gear and National Geographic,
and sponsored by Patagonia, Air Canada, Dunham Bootmakers, Chevy Avalanche,
and eVENT Fabrics, with assistance from Lake Louise Ski Area and PETZL.***