

MT. PLEASANT NEWS WASH JOURNAL

Fairfield native's film up for Emmy award



Cameron Mullenneaux

A former Fairfield woman has produced a film that is up for a News and Documentary Emmy.

The producer is Cameron Bargerstock Mullenneaux, daughter of Andy and Betty Bargerstock of Fairfield. Mullenneaux grew up in Fairfield and graduated from Maharishi School in 2004 before pursuing a career as a documentary filmmaker.

Her documentary that has been nominated for an Emmy is called "Angelique," which tells the story of a North Carolina high school student by the same name. Sixteen-year-old Angelique is a straight-A student at her school in Asheville where she excels in theater and dance, too.

Her friends and teachers could never guess the hardships Angelique has faced, for she has kept them a secret. At age 13, she was homeless. She lived in a car with her mother, grandmother and their dog. Her father lived on the other side of the country.

Mullenneaux learned of Angelique's situation through a social worker in Asheville. She

wanted to produce a short documentary about a "resilient young person who navigates life's challenges and leaves you hopeful and inspired instead of depressed about the universe." The social worker gave her a list of seven students who fit that description, and after hearing their stories, Mullenneaux chose to profile Angelique.

"Angelique was reticent to open up about [her homelessness], but at the same time, she wanted to be an inspiration to other people going through hard times, to other high-schoolers who keep their challenges secret."



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The film is nine minutes long and follows Angelique through her school day. Mullenneaux interviewed Angelique's mother, grandmother and the social worker. By the time filming began, the family had secured housing.

Angelique's mother suffers from depression and bipolar disorder, which contributed to the family's financial woes. Angelique knew it was up to her to break free of this insecurity and do the best she could in school.

"That's what drove her to be so successful in school," Mullenneaux said. "She knew that was her ticket out."

And boy, did she get a ticket. For her outstanding academic performance, Angelique received a free ride to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where she will study psychology this fall. She wants to better understand the mental illnesses that afflict people like her mother.

The film was shot in just two days in the spring of 2016. Mullenneaux hired a cinematographer to help film on the first day, and then she did all the filming on Day 2.

The mass media company Condé Nast Inc. funded the film for Glamour Magazine and posted it online last November. The company also owns magazines such as The New Yorker, Vogue, and Golf Digest.

The film has been well received and is now up for the "Outstanding Feature in a News Magazine" award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. The organization's 39th Annual News and Documentary Emmy Awards ceremony is Oct. 1 in New York City.

"It's going up against pieces from 20/20 and 60 Minutes," Mullenneaux said. "Those people are super well-funded, and I'm just an independent filmmaker."

"Angelique" is Mullenneaux's second film. Her first was a feature-length documentary called "Exit Music" about 28-year-old musician Ethan Rice, who was born with Cystic Fibrosis. Cystic Fibrosis is an incurable genetic illness that eventually leads to respiratory failure. The film follows Rice's final months of life as he questions how long he can fight, and what his family will do in his absence.

"I was honest with the family that I was going to film his end-of-life process," said Mullenneaux, who added that she filmed Rice for one year until he succumbed to his illness. "The film highlights the relationship between Ethan and his father, a Vietnam veteran, who has spent his whole life trying to keep his son alive."

Though filming for "Exit Music" began in 2014, Mullenneaux had to wait a few years for funding to finish the film, which she got from the Public Broadcasting Service. The film was released in April of this year when it premiered at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival in Toronto. A favorable review of the film appeared in Variety magazine.

"People who've seen it are really touched, and our 'Q and A' sessions always go 30 minutes over," Mullenneaux said.

Mullenneaux hopes to screen the film this fall at the Fairfield Arts & Convention Center, though no date has been set.

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