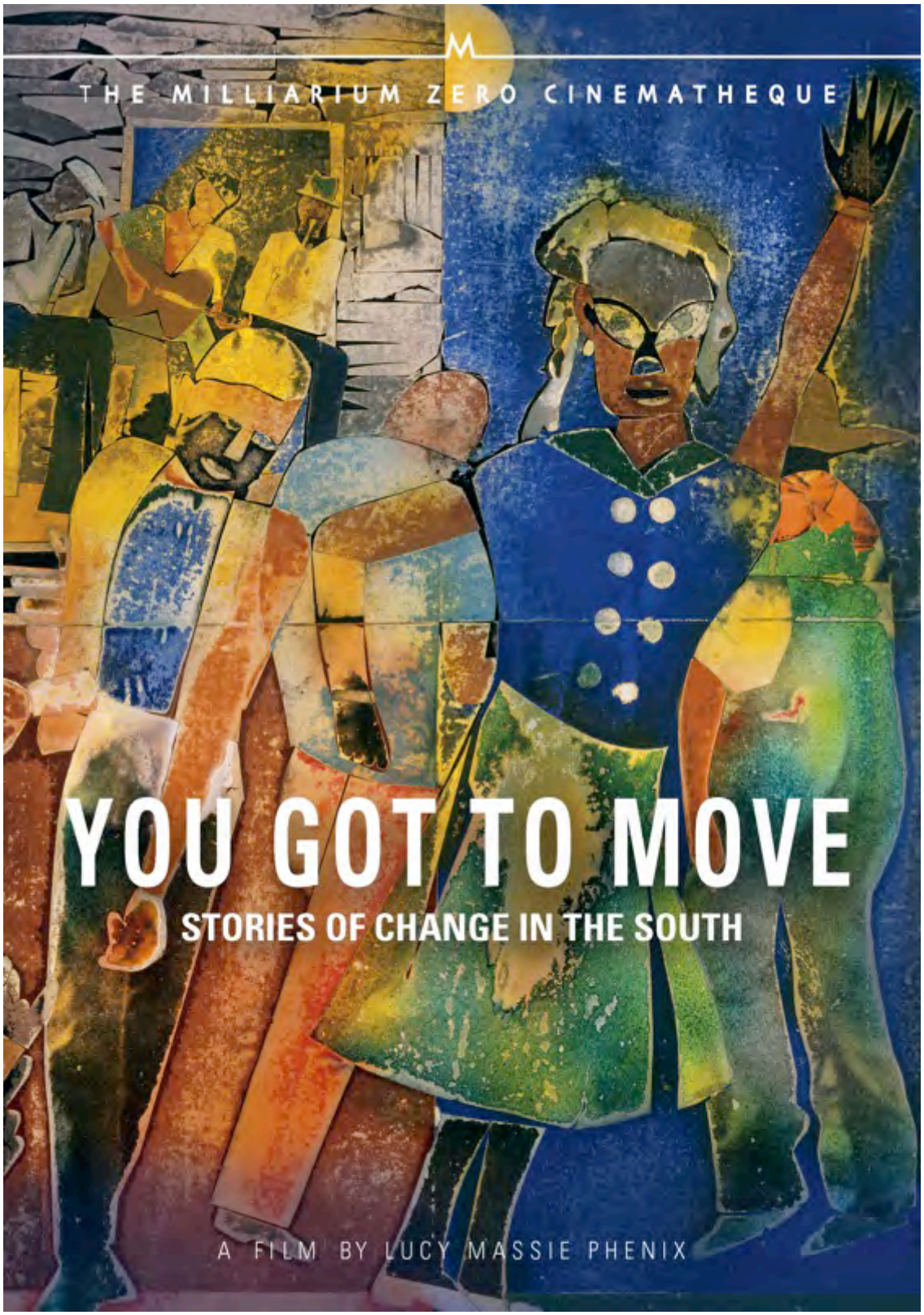

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YOU GOT TO MOVE
Stories of Change in the South

Produced, Directed, Co-Edited by Lucy Massie Phenix
Co-Directed and Co-Edited by Veronica Selver

Cinemetography:
Alan Dater
Gary Steele
Peter O'Neill
Roger Phenix

With
Myles Horton
Bernice Robinson
Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon
William Saunders
Rebecca Simpson
Gail & Richard Story
May Justice
Marylee & Russell Rogers
Becky Simpson
Members of The Bumpass Cove Community
and The Cranks Creek Survival Center Of Kentucky

Running time: 86 minutes. Color.
Country: United States.
Language: English

Cover Art on Box Desgin: Romare Bearden (1911-1988), *Of the Blues Mecklenburg County, Saturday Night,* 1974. Mixed Media collage on Masonite, 50" x 44", signed
Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC, New York, NY

Box Design by: Design Action Collective, www.designaction.org

SYNOPSIS

You Got to Move (USA, 1985, 87 minutes, color) is a documentary by Lucy Massie Phenix (*Winter Soldier*) and Veronica Selver (*Word Is Out*) that follows people from communities in the Southern United States in their various processes of becoming involved in social change. The film's centerpiece is the Highlander Folk School, a 50-year-old center for education and social action that was somehow involved in each of the lives chronicled. The film shows footage of peaceful, yet somber protests, tells the tales of educators who sought to teach reading and writing skills so that blacks could pass voting requirements in the 1950s and 60s, and reveals the change in lifestyle that Highlander brought to some people who felt that they could contribute nothing to the communities they cared about without a formal education. Each of the individuals in the film was involved in some of the most highly significant movements in American history, from organizing labor rights to the Civil Rights Movement and environmental efforts against the effects of strip mining and toxic waste dumping. *You Got to Move* features the music of the South and dwells on the courage of those who confront and change reality.

THE PEOPLE

Bernice Robinson, *a beautician who became the first teacher of a literacy program on Johns Island, off the coast of South Carolina, talks about teaching adults to read and write in order to pass voter registration requirements during the mid-1950's and 1960's throughout the Southern states:*

"I will never forget Anna Vastine. She couldn't read or write and it was the greatest reward when I had all the names up on the board one night, in jungle fashion, you know and I'd asked them could they pick their names out. Mrs. Vastine said, 'I see my name,' and she went down the list and she took the ruler from me and she said, 'That's Anna, that's my first name.' And then she went over on the other side up and down 'til she found Vastine and said, 'That's my name, V-A-S-T-I-N-E ,Vastine.' And goose pimples just came out all over me, because that woman couldn't read or write when she came in there. She was 65 years old."

Bernice Johnson Reagon *(October 4, 1942), who, as a college student, participated in challenging the legality of segregated public facilities in her hometown of Albany, Georgia—a student protest that grew into one of the first city-wide mass Demonstrations of the Civil Rights Movement—speaks of the pervading spirit of that time:*

"Now I sit back and look at some of the things we did, and I say, 'What in the world came over us,' you know? But death had nothing to do with what we were doing. If somebody shot us we would be dead. And when people died, we cried. And we went to funerals. And we went and did the next thing the next day, because it was really beyond life and death. It was really like… Sometimes you know what you're supposed to be doing, and when you know what you're supposed to be doing, it's somebody else's job to kill you."

Bernice Johnson Reagon, who led the singing group Sweet Honey in the Rock to worldwide fame and influence, is Professor Emeritus of History at American University and Curator Emeritus at the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of American History in Washington, DC.

Bill Saunders, *a former worker in a mattress factory who now runs a community radio station in Charleston, South Carolina, and was involved in creating a hospital workers' organization at the Medical College Hospital in Charleston, which organized a 100-day-long hospital workers' strike in 1969:*

"It was really an experience for me, because again, I was able to learn that there were whites tha were suffering the same way that blacks were as it relates to economics. Now, not having access to all of the restrooms, not getting into the lunchroom, they didn't have those problems. But, actually, they weren't making any money, and that's where the problem lies."

Saunders continues to be a leader and teacher in his community of North Charleston and Johns Island.

Becky *Simpson*, *fought to get damage payments for the people in her community in Cranks Creek, Harlan County, Kentucky—much of whose property was destroyed by a series of floods related to strip-mining abuses— speaks of her success in reclaiming much of the mountainous land around Cranks Creek:*

"My education was just like a big black spot in my life. I couldn't go beyond that, I thought. I thought, probably if you try to do thing like I've done, you'd need, you know, like a college degree. But if you ain't got it, you have to go on without it. So I found out you don't have to be educated to do what you have to do."

Simpson is still helping to keep the Cranks Creek Survival Center going in the midst of massive renewed devastation from mountaintop removal in Appalachia.

Gail Story and MaryLee Rogers, *two housewives from Bumpass Cove in East Tennessee helped organize community action to stop trucks from dumping hazardous chemicals in the garbage dump in their area.*

"Oh mercy, five years ago, and now. Well we was just ordinary housewives. We taught ourself to drive. We didn't go any place that we didn't take the kids, which was just to the grocery

store and maybe to the Laundromat. We wasn't involved in anything, not even PTA.
We didn't feel like we could donate anything. We didn't think there was anything we could do."
— *Gail*

"First thing we should say: Our mothers taught us to be good mothers and wives— that's it. That was our role in life, you know. That's what was taught and that's what we did five year ago— watch soap operas. Now I don't even get to watch a soap opera. I never see a soap opera."
— *MaryLee*

Myles Horton *(July 5, 1905 - January 19, 1990) is one of the founders of Highlander Folk School, a 50-year-old center for education and social action:*

"I think the future is… well, as somebody said one time, 'it's out there.' It's not only out there, but it's ready to be changed. It's malleable, and there's nothing fixed that you can't unfix. But to unfix things that appear to be fixed, you have to not only be creative and imaginative, but courageously dedicated to the long haul."

HIGHLANDER RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER

The Highlander Research and Education Center, established in 1932 as the Highlander Folk School, serves to educate people to become leaders of new social movements. Some of the first issues the school tackled were those involving labor and union laws, which the school believed were unfixable until the harshness of racism and segregation were first confronted. In 1953 the school changed its focus; it turned its attention from labor rights to the Civil Rights Movement. It focused on voter education and rights, as well as desegregating schools and even played a large role in popularizing freedom songs, which inspired solidarity. The school played a huge role in establishing Citizenship Schools, which taught people how to read and write so that they could vote and participate in politics. Accused of being a "Communist training school," the school was outlawed in 1961 by the Tennessee Supreme Court despite being supported by representatives from the United Nations as well as popular figures such as Eleanor Roosevelt. However, the school reopened in Knoxville, Tennessee under the name it carries today. Highlander continued to turn its attention to teaching groups of people who were oppressed to become leaders. In the 1970s and 1980s, it attacked poverty crises in the south as well as the issue of environmental devastation from stripmining in Appalachia. Highlander has brought to power many of the strongest and most effective leaders against injustice, from labor rights to the Civil Rights Movement. Today, the group continues to encourage those who struggle for justice through its education in leadership and its commitment to providing help to those who need it.

PRODUCTION

In 1980, Lucy Massie Phenix was living in Berkeley and in the final months of editing the now-classic documentary *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*. At the time, she was attending a course on political activism taught by a Professor John Hurst in which Myles Horton, founder of the Highlander Folk School—whom she had come to know during the Civil Rights Movement when she was involved with the school—gave a series of guest lectures about Highlander and organizing grassroots social change.

These lectures found Phenix at a particularly charged period in her life. President Carter had just signed the First Strike Directive authorizing preemptive nuclear strike and after attending a weekend conference on Medical Consequences of Nuclear Weapons and Nuclear War, Phenix was almost ready to give up film and involve herself fulltime in activism.

"After that weekend, I was unsure that making films was the most direct way to effect change about this most urgent matter," said Phenix, "It was at this point that I realized how powerless I felt and how powerless most of the people I knew felt, even though we cared deeply about making the world safer. I then understood that what Myles Horton was talking about, the idea of helping people realize and act on their own power to effect social change, was what I needed to make a film about."

Phenix went to Tennessee that winter to begin research on *You Got to Move*. She had decided that the main thrust of the documentary was the question: *What is it that changes people from feeling powerless to making them see and feel their own power in bringing about changes that will affect their lives?* She decided the best way to answer this question was to focus on telling the story of people who had gone from feeling powerless to enacting actual change. In effect, the film would be about the *process* of these people as opposed to making the film a history of Highlander or the story of Myles Horton. "What we were looking for," explains Phenix, "was people who would talk about their process; what they were like before, how they felt powerless and what they did, step by step to change. The film has more women than men in it for this reason." Among countless others, Phenix spoke with iconic Civil Rights figure Rosa Parks at this time and considered interviewing her for the film but in the end, opted to not to in the interest of examining the stories of more unsung heroes.

Perhaps the largest and most time-consuming task of the entire four-year production was the tireless fundraising. A letter-writing campaign yielded $325,000 from various foundations, humanities and arts counsels, and individuals—one generous single donor giving $10,000 out of her pocket. The fundraising continued throughout production and much of it was done personally by Massie Phenix herself.

In 1982, Massie Phenix asked Veronica Selver (who had worked with Phenix on the essential gay rights documentary *Word Is Out*) to co-direct.

Being that most of the shooting locations were rural and remote, the action followed the crews' availability rather than the reverse. Massie Phenix says of the production: "A crew would come down to do days of shooting in many locations during one shoot, and the shoots were limited. The editing process was lengthy, finding the shape of the film that was telling many stories, rather than one."

> We had to leave out many stories and scenes that would have made other, perhaps more beautiful, films. Often Veronica and I felt we had to give up tangential or subtle stories in favor of the ones with greater meaning, since we felt that there was an urgency to brining about the social change that was needed. I find that filmmaking that comes out of involvement in social action often is less concerned with the aesthetics of a film than the informative effect. And yet we both had enough experience to know that art can be more deeply affecting than polemics. So in the editing, we were always walking that line. We were greatly helped by the participation of Myles Horton, as a friend and as a teacher, who encouraged us, and trusted us without asking for any editorial control.

"We didn't just go in there and shoot a documentary," says Selver, "We lived in the community we were documenting, we were immersed. Lucy said, 'I need some help. It'll just be about three months.' So Cappy [Coates, photo archivist for *You Got to Move*] and I subletted our apartment in San Francisco and moved to Tennessee. Then it was three more months and then a few more. We ended up selling the apartment and staying for three years."

ACCLAIM

Review by William Ferris, published in *Independent Spirit* in August 1986
***William Ferris is Director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi. He has produced fifteen documentary films, is the author of six books, and served as a consultant for* The Color Purple.**

YOU GOT TO MOVE. Lucy Massie Phenix and Veronica Selver. 1985. 16mm. Color. Sound. 85m.

The American South is viewed as a region steeped in tradition, a land where change seldom touches people and their institutions. The novel and film, *Gone with the Wind,* popularized a southern epic in which white southerners sacrificed all rather than change their way of life.

This image of an unchanging South is more myth than reality, for the region changed radically following the Civil War, World War II, and the Civil Rights Movement. Most, however, would argue that this change was imposed on southerners from without rather than initiated from within. The idea that southerners have the vision or resources to change their way of cultural and political institutions simply does not fit the popular view of the region.

Given this image of the South, Lucy Massie Phenix and Veronica Selver's *You Got to Move* offers a rich new understanding of the region and her people. Throughout portraits of six individuals who worked with the Highlander Center and through conversations with its founder, Myles Horton, the filmmakers reveal how grass-roots community efforts have persisited and prevailed in changing the region over the last 50 years. From its earlier civil rights and labor organizing to its recent support of citizens' groups who oppose toxic waste dumping and strip mining, the Highlander Center has inspired individuals and offered them the courage to challenge racial and class barriers in their communities. Bernice Robinson, a black beautician from Johns Island, off the coast of South Carolina, remembers "It was the only place in the South where blacks and whites could really meet." Since 1932 the center Center has appropriately shifted its focus in response to the needs of the region. Bernice Johnson Reagon, originally from Albany, Georgia and now Director of Programs in Black America at the Smithsonian Institution, sees this flexibility as a key to the programs' success and stresses. "That makes Highlander special for me—the ability to move through time."

You Got to Move credits Highlander Center obliquely by focusing on those who worked there and returned to their communities to deal with social and economic issues. Through conversations with these community leaders, we quickly sense how deeply Horton touched their lives. Horton appears several times during the film while working in his garden. He commented to me once in his garden that ideas, like plants, require a well-prepared, fertile bed of soil. Myles Horton and Highlander Center have nurtured ideas and commitments that have brought fundamental change to the region. It was here that Martin Luther King was able to meet with white and black southerners to develop a strategy for the Civil Rights Movement. It was here that the song *We Shall Overcome* was brought by striking tobacco workers from Charleston, South Carolina in 1947 and was disseminated in the early 60s to become the Movement's anthem. It was here that Rosa Parks came the summer before her historic decision to keep her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus when the bus driver ordered her to give up her seat to a white man, thereby sparking the Montgomery bus boycott. These and many other historic moments were

inspired at the Highlander Center. Bill Saunders, from Charleston, South Carolina, reflects that Highlander "had the agenda of poor people."

In many ways the Highlander Center was without walls. The institution was, in fact, driven from its earlier home in Monteagle in 1961. Its buildings, vehicles, and library were sold at public auction after an angry trial at which Horton and his associates were accused of being both Communist and immoral. Like a phoenix rising from its ashes, the center was moved to Knoxville and later quickly rebuilt in New Market, Tennessee.

You Got to Move effectively shows that the Highlander Center's story lies not in buildings but in people. The film opens with a series of short interviews with Myles Horton, Bernice Robinson, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Bill Saunders, Rebecca Simpson, Gail Story, and Mary Lee Rogers, each of whom later appear in longer sections which focus on their life and work. The viewer is struck by the warmth of each speaker and by their varied backgrounds. Male and female, white and black, a college student, a beautician, a mattress factory worker, housewives and mothers from Appalachia to the Deep South draw together to tell a common story. Each through the Highlander Center discovers they have both the personal resources and the legal right to rid their communities of segregation, strip mining, and toxic waste. At Highlander they meet others from diverse backgrounds and find a common bond.

The film's opening sequence of interviews, while brief, effectively initiates a bonding between the viewer and each speaker which steadily deepens as the film evolves. Look as one may, there are no seams in the film. Like a patchwork quilt, its rich, colorful portraits are woven together with a deft touch. We move through each section and easily shift to new places and people. Scenes in Charleston, South Carolina; Harlan County, Kentucky; Bumpass Cove, Tennessee; New Market, Tennessee; and Deep South scenes from the Civil Rights Movement all flow as inseparable parts of the whole.

Phenix and Selver effectively use music to underscore the rich array ofvoices and images in the film. An opening sequence of black and white photographs is carefully panned by the camera while fred McDowell's powerful rendition of *You Got to Move* is played. Musical selections by the Moving Star Hall Singers, Hazel Dickens, Sweet Honey in the Rock, the Reel World String Band and others are appropriately introduced in later sections of the film. This music heightens the deep love for the land which each of the speakers stresses in conversations. The music and their voices together evoke a strong viewer response to Appalachian landscapes scarred by strip mining and polluted with hazardous waste. The section on strip mining opens with a haunting ballad with the lines "I come from the mountains, Kentucky's my home… Now there's only black water runs through the land."

Through each story we sense the presence of Myles Horton. The viewer is increasingly aware of how Horton has touched and changed each life in the film. Moving back and forth from the communities and voices of speakers to Horton tending his garden, we feel the bond of courage which they share. Horton, like Gandhi in India and Thoreau in Concord, has a deep sense of history, and his beliefs clearly shape the lives of those with whom he works. The great teacher is known through his students, and each speaker bears witness to Horton's vision.

Having presented the lives and places Myles Horton helped shape, the film shows him speaking at the Highlander Center's 50th anniversary in 1982. He reflects, "We are part of a process of democratizing society in hope to have a just society for everybody. Twin to political democracy. We must be courageously dedicated for the long haul."

The closing film credits reveal an impressive list of contributors, consultants, and supporters. Rich documentary footage used throughout the film is drawn from collections of film

news archives. The work of thirty still photographers—from Bob Adelman to Marion Post Wolcott—is also used. Financial support was provided by the Tennessee, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Alabama Arts, Humanitites and film funds and by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Ford Foundation. And personal acknowledgements of 132 individuals are also included.

These credits reflect the diverse, broad-based support upon which Lucy Massie Phenix and Veronica Selver drew to produce *You Got to Move.* Their film is a classic which every southerner and every American should view. It is a beautifully crafted work of ove which will move and inspire all who see it.

THE FILMMAKERS

Lucy Massie Phenix (May 22, 1942 —) has an astonishing track record in the documentary field. She has been involved in groundbreaking and critically acclaimed documentaries on nearly every major American political issue one can think of.

Massie Phenix grew up in a segregated Lexington, Kentucky. She played in the Central Kentucky Youth Symphony Orchestra, and went to Connecticut College for Women where she graduated with honors in Philosophy before going to Eastern North Carolina with the American Friends Service Committee and working there as a community organizer from l965 to l967. She then attended Antioch Putney Graduate School in Education, where she received her MAT. Following this, she began teaching in the Children's Community Workshop School on W. 88th St. and Columbus in New York. It was in New York that she and her partner at the time Roger Phenix became involved with other investigators and filmmakers (known as the Winterfilm Collective) in the filming of the Winter Soldier Investigation. The documentary they produced, *Winter Soldier* (which Massie Phenix helped edit) won a prize at the Berlin International Film Festival. In 1974, she produced Roger Phenix's short documentary *Wild Yeast* about a wandering folk singer. She then went on to direct the "Galapagos" episode of the television nature series "The Big Blue Marble" before working as an editor and producer on the famed 1978 gay rights documentary *Word is Out* (on which *You Got to Move* co-director Veronica Selver worked as a producer). The film was the first major documentary of its kind and won the DuPont Citation for Excellence in Broadcast Journalism. In 1980, Phenix edited the National Film Registry-selected WWII feminist doc *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*. In 1985 this she returned to the director's chair with her first feature documentary *You Got to Move*. Following this, she directed the 1994 Sundance-nominated doc *Cancer in Two Voices*. She then edited the Oscar®-nominated 1998 Vietnam documentary *Regret to Inform,* which won numerous awards, including a Peabody and two prizes at Sundance. In 2000, she edited Elizabeth Barret's award-winning *Stranger with a Camera*, about the murder of a documentary filmmaker in the Appalachian region of Kentucky and the intersection of morality and filmmaking. In 2004, she edited a short doc on immigration, *The New Americans*, which aired on the PBS documentary program "Independent Lens" and won an International Documentary Association award. She is currently directing a documentary about pottery entitled *From the Inside: The Work of Karen Karnes*.

Veronica Selver is a Bay Area filmmaker who has worked on social issue documentaries for over thirty years. In 2000, she completed *KPFA On The Air*, a film on the Berkeley-based radio station, KPFA, and its 50-year history of independent, alternative broadcasting. The documentary, which she produced and directed, was part of PBS' P.O.V. series and aired nationally in the fall of 2000. Her co-directing credits include *You Got to Move*, a feature documentary on the Highlander Folk School and community organizing in the South; *First Look*, a documentary on contemporary Cuban artists; and Columbia Dupont Excellence in Broadcast Journalism winner *Word is Out*, the first feature documentary on growing up gay in the United States. Her editing credits include these films as well as many of public television's most highly regarded broadcasts: *On Company Business*, a three part series on the history of the CIA; Academy Award nominated *Berkeley in the Sixties*; *Harry Bridges: A Man and His Union*; *Absolutely Positive*, on people living with HIV; *Coming Out Under Fire*, on gays and lesbians in the military during World War Two; and *Blacks and Jews*, a feature-length documentary which premiered at Sundance and aired on P.O.V. in 1997. She also worked as an editor on *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin*, a documentary portrait of the Civil Rights activist and architect of the 1963 March on Washington. The film was shown at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2003 at the same time as it was aired nationally on PBS in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Between 2004 and 2007 Veronica Selver completed two short films as producer, director, editor: *Raising the Roof*, on a pioneering collective of women carpenters from the Bay Area, and *Cape Song,* a documentary on music and art in Provincetown, Massachusetts. She directed and edited the Milliarium DVD extras for *Word Is Out*. She is currently editing Mark Kitchell's history of the environmental movement, *A Fierce Green Fire,* due for release in 2010.

Music of Bernice Johnson Reagon, featured in *You Got to Move*

You Got to Move features the music of singer Bernice Johnson Reagon, whose voice and songs were her own style of activism. Reagon's first experiences in music belonged to a folk club in Saratoga Springs, New York, where she sang unaccompanied starting in 1962. She later helped organize the Southern Folk Festival, a group which toured and was often hired by both black and white organizations to inspire a vision of integration in the south.

Reagon's role as an organizer and performer began was she was a student in Albany, Georgia, where she was a secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and a singer in the *Freedom Singers* group. Reagon was one of the first members of the group, which toured the country and communicated the stories of community movement campaigns to audiences in different parts of the nation.

She continued on to become a singer in the Harambee Singers, an all-black, all-female *a cappella* group. This group performed at many Black Arts gatherings and was described as a "choral Black women collective voice calling for unity." Reagon's most famous act, however, existed in her contributions to the group *Sweet Honey in the Rock,* which she organized in 1973. She performed a wide range of genres with the group for 30 years until she retired in 2004.

"What Bernice has done with Sweet Honey is more innovative than what anyone has done to synthesize root and evolved forms into a new form. She's done it with vocal music, but in a sense she's done it with instrumental music, too, because she's taken the voice and used it as another kind of instrument. She has drawn on the richest wellspring of Black and in some cases, non-black, vocal tradition and created a brilliant new genre. It's the most important thing being done with traditional vocal styles and repertoire than anybody's done in this country."
—Ralph Rinzler, Smithsonian Asst Secretary for Public Service

Milliarium Zero

Milliarium Zero is a film distribution company specifically created to acquire and distribute films of strong political and social content. The co-founders are Dennis Doros and Amy Heller, who started Milestone Film & Video in 1990 and still run it today. Milliarium Zero translate from Latin to "milestone zero." In the US, this official landmark from where all roads in North America are measured, is located opposite the White House.

You Got to Move is Milliarium's third release after the Winterfilm Collective's documentary *Winter Soldier* on the Viet Nam veterans' 1971 conference and the Mariposa Film Group's *Word is Out,* the classic 1977 documentary about coming of age and coming out in America.

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