High School Filmmakers Recognized and Awarded At Ramapo College’s Sixth Annual Film Festival

MAHWAH, N.J. – Just a few days after Oscar nominations blanketed news channels, Ramapo College’s sixth annual RCNJ High School Film Festival took center stage on Saturday, January 28th at the Berrie Center on campus. More than 150 films were submitted by students from high schools across New Jersey. Among the more than 40 high schools that participated, submissions hailed from nearby Bergen County Academies in Bergen County, Passaic County Technical Institute in neighboring Passaic County, Bayonne High School in Hudson County, and even as far south as Middletown and Raritan High Schools in Monmouth County.

The official selections included 42 films chosen by a panel of Ramapo College film faculty, current Ramapo film students and industry professionals. Students entered original films in a variety of genres and were awarded in several categories including Best Editing, Best Writing, Best Cinematography, Best Acting, Best Animation, Best Documentary, Best Fiction Film, and Best of the Fest. Each entrant received an Oscar-type statuette. Approximately $5,000 in film equipment and software awards were distributed to winners from sponsors of the event. Reflecting on the success of the event, Neel Scott, Associate Professor of Digital Filmmaking at Ramapo College shared, “This was the sixth annual festival and our biggest yet, with over 200 filmmakers, friends, parents, cast and crew packing the Berrie Center’s Sharp Theater to watch 42 films of every type and genre from dozens of high schools all across New Jersey. If the films from the festival are any evidence, the next generation of New Jersey filmmakers is very talented. We look forward to continuing to grow the festival each year, and to screening the impressive work of New Jersey high school students.”

The winners included:

Best Cinematography:
23, directed by Anthony Conte
Lakeland Regional High School

Best Editing
Why My Room is Never Clean, directed by Sharice Lacson
High Tech High School
Best Screenwriting
TARDY! written by Joshua Apostolico and Jarrett Jackson
Columbia High School

Best Actor
Caroline Sheridan, SHREDS OF EVIDENCE
Park Ridge High School

Best Documentary
Maya Zeidman, ISLA NENA
East Brunswick Magnet School - School of the Arts

Best Fiction Film
Ross Perlman for OBLIGATORY PARASITE
Columbia High School

Best Animation
Leonardo Tarascio for CRISIS
River Dell Regional High School

Best of the Fest
Gabrielle Werts for A CASE OF YOU
East Brunswick Magnet School - School of the Arts

Planning will soon be underway for next year’s festival. Visit the RCNJ Film Festival website for more information.

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**About Ramapo College**

Ramapo College of New Jersey (RCNJ) develops responsible leaders who serve as empathetic problem solvers and ethical change agents across all sectors. The College’s unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its liberal arts core, its size (approximately 5,500 students), and its setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border provide an optimal environment for individualized, student-centered learning and leadership development. RCNJ’s designation as “New Jersey’s Public Liberal Arts College” by the State legislature is the foundation from which the College’s commitment to an accessible and transformative undergraduate and graduate education is realized.

Graduation and retention rates of RCNJ students exceed national averages and, as just one of many markers of student success, the superior rates are made possible by the College’s provision of impactful mentorship and student well-being supports, hands-on learning, and a range of opportunities for service and leadership development. In fact, Ramapo is ranked #1 among New Jersey public institutions by *College Choice* and is
recognized as the State’s top college on the list of Best Disability Schools by *Great Value Colleges*. Further commendations include designation as: a “Military Friendly College” in *Victory Media’s Guide to Military Friendly Schools*, and as a leading college by *U.S. News & World Report, Kiplinger’s, Princeton Review, and Money Magazine*, among others.

Established in 1969, *Condé Nast Traveler* named Ramapo as one of the 50 Most Beautiful College Campuses in America. The barrier-free campus occupies 300 acres and is home to 52 bachelor’s degree programs spanning the arts, business, data science, humanities, education, nursing, social work, social sciences, and the sciences. In addition, the College offers graduate programs leading to master’s degrees in Accounting, Applied Mathematics, Business Administration, Contemporary Instructional Design, Computer Science, Creative Music Technology, Data Science, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education, as well as a Doctor of Nursing Practice. Every degree program is designed and delivered through the collaborative and interdisciplinary efforts of student-centered faculty scholars and staff who are committed to serving the public good through the delivery of an academically rigorous, inclusive, and transformative collegiate experience.

Distinguished as a Career Development College of Distinction by *CollegesofDistinction.com*, every student at Ramapo is enrolled in the College’s unique and award-winning Pathways Program which equips and empowers students, across the continuum of their student career, to secure internships, pursue graduate/professional school, and/or enter/re-enter the job market. As a result, Ramapo College’s over 40,000 alumni are confident, intellectually curious, self-aware, and humble people who are highly sought after and who make a positive impact at local, national, and global levels. As community leaders, engaged citizens, and professional colleagues, Ramapo College alumni serve as the change agents necessary to innovate, problem solve, and elevate the human condition in NJ and beyond.