



COMMUNIQUE

**WIFT-Atlantic Speaker Series
Ms. Sharon McGowan, Producer / Director
Monday, March 9, 7:00pm – 9:00pm
Halifax Club, 1682 Hollis Street, Halifax**

**Open to all, please email your RSVP to wiftatlantic@gmail.com
by 5:00pm Thursday, March 5.**

Meet the founding Board of the newly formed WIFT - Atlantic Chapter and Gemini Award winning Vancouver based Producer, Sharon McGowan, at the Halifax Club, Monday, March 9, 7-9pm. The event is free of charge, though a non-perishable food donation to Feed Nova Scotia is kindly requested. WIFT-AT annual memberships will be available for purchase.

Founders of the WIFT – Atlantic Chapter have worked steadily since August 2008 to open an Atlantic Canadian chapter of the international group, Women in Film and Television (www.wifti.org). Film Nova Scotia has come on board to sponsor the March 9th event, which will introduce the film and television community to the founding board members and raise awareness of the new organization.

“There is such vibrant talent among the women in Atlantic Canada - it makes complete sense to bring everyone together in one organization committed to ensuring that the talents and voices of these women are nurtured and celebrated. We're so ready,” says founding Chair, Jan Miller.

WIFT is an international organization that was created in 1973 to give women who were struggling to have a voice in Television and in Film a network and support system. There are now currently 35 chapters worldwide. WIFT continues to grow with a mandate to be a global network dedicated to advancement for women in professional development and achievement in film, video, and other screen-based media.

Sharon McGowan has been invited to speak in Halifax as one of the founding members of WIFT –Vancouver, and specifically about the research studies that they have recently conducted in terms of women's role and presence in the film, television and new media industries. Sharon will offer experience, perspective, history and inspiration for the Atlantic Chapter as an organization in improving the position of women in the screen industries.



SHARON McGOWAN

Sharon McGowan was a founding board member and early president of Vancouver Women in Film and Television (1989). She received the Woman of the Year Award in 1999 and is also an Honorary Lifetime Member of that organization.

McGowan most recently served on the BC Association of Film Professionals Task Force (2005-2008) investigating labour and funding issues facing women working in both the service and indigenous film production sectors. This led to the creation of the Please Adjust Your Set campaign and website outlining the statistics gathered and future actions.

McGowan has an MFA in Film Studies from UBC and is currently an Associate Professor in the UBC Film Program, where she also serves as Associate Head of the Department of Theatre and Film.

As a filmmaker, Sharon McGowan's most recent film is the documentary, ***The Oldest Basketball Team in the World*** which she directed and produced for Chum TV. The film follows the "Retreads", women with an average age of 72 as they prepare to compete at the intimidating World Masters Games. The New York Times described the film as "compassionate, heartfelt and inspirational."

Sharon McGowan is also known for producing the feature film box office hit ***Better than Chocolate***. The film premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival and was released in the US where it played on over 300 screens.

McGowan also produced the feature films ***The Lotus Eaters***, which won three Genie Awards including Best Screenplay and ***Saint Monica***, which had its international premiere at the Kinderfest Section of the Berlin Film Festival and won the Cultural Expressions Award – Best Narrative Feature at the 2003 Sarasota Film Festival and she served as consulting producer on three independent feature films: Gary Burns' ***A Problem with Fear*** and ***waydowntown*** and Bruce Spangler's ***Protection***.

McGowan was also a producer on the CBC television film ***Society's Child***, which was nominated for a Best Picture Gemini.

McGowan has also been a producer and director of documentaries for the NFB and private broadcasters. Her other documentaries include ***Soul Communion***, which explores the work of contemporary Doukhobor artists and ***Ellen's Story***, about adult illiteracy. She was also a producer on the Gemini Award-winning documentary series ***Weird Homes***.

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