

Press Info

First Byte Productions and the Palfreman Film Group are thrilled to announce the roll-out of *The Computers*, a twenty-minute documentary, sharing the inspirational story of six young women who programmed the first all-electronic, digital computer, the ENIAC, as part of a secret WWII project. Without programming languages, manuals or operating systems, they mastered the new computer and programmed it to perform a ballistics trajectory (differential calculus!) thereby solving an Army problem and founding modern programming!

Unfortunately, in 1946, when the ENIAC was unveiled to the press and the public, the ENIAC Programmers were never introduced. Their story was lost for decades and their names not passed to computing history as Programming Pioneers. The ENIAC Programmers project strives to help young women and young men learn the names and stories of Betty Snyder Holberton, Jean Jennings Bartik, Kathleen McNulty Mauchly Antonelli, Ruth Lichterman Teitelbaum and Frances Bilas Spence – for these amazing computing pioneers belong to history and to all of us!

The Computers World Premier will be at the Seattle International Film Festival, on Saturday, May 24, 2014, at 2pm in the SIFF Uptown Theater. It will be shown as part of Amazing Journeys, a collection of inspiration documentary stories, at:

SIFF Cinema Uptown
511 Queen Anne Avenue N
Seattle, WA 98109

Q&A with Kathy Kleiman, Founder of the ENIAC Programmers Project, Co-Producer and Co-Writer of *The Computers*

Q: How did you discover the ENIAC Programmers story?

A: I found a number of photographs of the ENIAC in the mid-1980s, and the men were in the captions and the women were not. When I asked who the women were, I was told they were models. But they did not look like models to me. They looked like people who knew about the great computer they were standing in front of (which was huge), and I wanted to find out who they were.

Q: How did you find them?

A: I was fortunate to be asking my questions right around the time of ENIAC's 40th Anniversary in 1986. I attended the anniversary, and found a group of older women talking about work they had done on the ENIAC. It took me years to understand their story, but ultimately I learned that the women were the first programmers of the ENIAC as part of a U.S. Army WWII artillery and ballistics trajectory project.

Q: Why did you continue your work for so long?

A: There was very little written about early programming, and especially programming the ENIAC. It took a long time to figure out what the ENIAC Programmers did and how they did – to learn how the ENIAC worked and how the ENIAC Women programmed it without programming languages or manuals. But the ENIAC Women inspired me, and each turn showed me even more about the magnitude of their work and the significance of their contributions. I knew fairly early on that I wanted to share this story with everyone!

Q: What do you hope will come from the documentary?

A: I hope that Middle School Students and above will watch *The Computers* and cheer. Today too many students have the impression that computing and technology are careers for men, but that is not true. Internet companies, including Google and Facebook, actively recruit young women for positions—and speak highly of the benefit from diverse teams and diverse perspectives. Computing careers are wonderful, interesting, lucrative, creative, flexible, and fun and I would like all to know they are open to everyone—women and men—and that our computing pioneers were women and men too.

Q: Any last thoughts?

A. Yes, stereotypes run deep in computing, and it is time for them to stop!

*For more information about the ENIAC Programmers Project and **The Computers** documentary, please contact [Kathy Kleiman](mailto:Kathy@eniacprogrammers.org) (Kathy@eniacprogrammers.org) and [Kate McMahon](mailto:KateMcMahon1@hotmail.com) (Katemcmahon1@hotmail.com)*

Documentary Team



Jon Palfreman PhD

Co-Producer, Co-Writer

A veteran of both UK and US television, Jon Palfreman has made over 40 BBC and PBS one-hour documentaries including the Peabody Award winning series “The Machine That Changed the World”, the Emmy Award winning NOVA “Siamese Twins” and the Alfred I. duPont&ndahs;Columbia University Silver Baton winner “Harvest of Fear.” Palfreman has

received many awards honoring the quality and accuracy of his journalism. The recipient of the Victor Cohn Prize for Excellence in Medical Writing, Palfreman is three-time winner of the American Association for the Advancement of Science science writing prize, three-time winner of the National Association of Science Writers “Science-in-Society” Journalism Award and a winner of the Writers Guild Award for best script. In the area of Parkinson’s disease research, Palfreman co-authored a book with neuroscientist Bill Langston, *The Case of the Frozen Addicts*, and produced two NOVA documentaries chronicling the story of the MPTP cases, *NOVA: The Case of the Frozen Addict*, and *NOVA: Brain Transplant*. A 2006 Nieman Fellow in Journalism at Harvard University, Palfreman is currently KEZI Distinguished Professor of Broadcast Journalism at the University of Oregon.



Kathy Kleiman

Co-Producer, Co-Writer

Kathy Kleiman discovered the ENIAC programmers as a Harvard undergraduate and a female programmer in search of role models and inspiration. Her junior paper and senior thesis explored the missing chapter of computers—the ENIAC programmers and many other women who were pioneers in early programming and software. A decade later, upon learning that most of the ENIAC programmers were not invited to the ENIAC’s 50th anniversary, she set out to record their oral histories, seek recognition for their accomplishments and produce a documentary to tell their dramatic story.

Through the ENIAC Programmers Project which she founded, Kleiman traveled with the ENIAC Programmers to forums throughout the U.S., and with them, and alone, has spoken to thousands of young women and me about early computer programming and the contributions of a diverse team on ENIAC, UNIVAC and later computer projects. “The ENIAC Programmers are inspirations to us all, and their stories open the doors to careers in technology for everyone, especially young women.” Kleiman is also a senior Internet law & policy attorney with Fletcher, Heald & Hildreth, P.L.C. in Arlington, Virginia.



Kate McMahon

Co-Producer and Director

Kate McMahon has contributed to more than 40 hours of national documentary and long-format news programming, primarily for PBS, since she began her career in 1998 as an Associate Producer for *The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*. Today, she produces and co-produces documentaries for the PBS series *FRONTLINE*, independent films, digital channels and PBS stations. Her current film is about the history of women in computing for Google Family Foundations—release date 2014. Recent film projects include *FRONTLINE: Life and Death in Assisted Living* (2013); *FRONTLINE: Nuclear Aftershocks* (2012); *FRONTLINE: The Vaccine War* (2010); *FRONTLINE: Sick Around America* (2009) and *FRONTLINE: Sick Around the World* (2008). In 2008, Kate’s co-production of the 2-hour historical film *Andrew Jackson: Good, Evil and the Presidency* premiered on PBS. In 2004 Kate associate-produced the Oscar-nominated film *ENRON: The Smartest Guys in the Room* and in 2005 co-produced *FRONTLINE: The Meth Epidemic*. In 2001, while working at *ABC NEWS Nightline*, Kate covered the tragic events of 9/11 from New York City. She went on to work for *NOW with Bill Moyers* covering the nexus of business and politics in Washington, D.C. Her on-going production of *Inside the Psychologist’s Studio* is a popular web series for the Association for Psychological Science. Outside of producing documentaries rooted in journalism, Kate has produced and reported public radio programs and published articles in *Metro Parent Magazine*. She enjoys living in Portland, OR with her husband, two children, their fluff-y dog and pink fish.

Mark Rublee

Director of Photography

After graduating from New York University’s Film and Television Program in 1981, Rublee worked as a freelance cinematographer, videographer and director. His travels have taken him around the world shooting in remote location such as China, Japan, Hong Kong, Ukraine, most of western Europe, Peru, Ellsmere Island above the Arctic Circle, and extensively throughout the US and Canada. Broadcast credits include: *NOVA*, *FRONTLINE*, *60 Minutes*, *ESPN*, *Fox Television*, *CBS Sports*, *Chedd Angier*, *Discovery Channel*, *Martha Stuart Communications*,

Jim Henson Productions, ARD German TV and NHK Japanese Television. Rublee first teamed up with Palfreman in the early 1990s on Palfreman's Emmy Award-winning NOVA, "Siamese Twins". Rublee has shot for many of Palfreman's programs ever since including FRONTLINE: "Nuclear Reaction", NOVA/Frontline: "What's Up With the Weather?", NOVA/Frontline: "Harvest of Fear", FRONTLINE: "Sick Around the World", and FRONTLINE "Sick Around America."

John E. Low

Composer

John E. Low is a composer based in Los Angeles. A graduate of the Berklee College of Music, John has scored over 40 episodes of award-winning PBS series Frontline. He has also worked countless commercials, film trailers and documentary films, including the Oscar short-listed film Jujitsuing Reality. John currently lives in Culver City with his wife and 4-year-old daughter.