

ISFF Houston Debuts DEI Panel with Creators of 'This is My Tennis' & Arquella Hargrove of Alchemy Consulting Moderating

International Sports Film Festival Houston and Community Partner Arquella Hargrove of Alchemy Consulting Group Moderate DEI Panel for 'This is My Tennis'

HOUSTON, TEXAS , USA, February 4, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- POST Houston, the newly renovated Barbara Jordan 'Houston Post Office' developed and reimagined by Lovett Commercial, welcomes the 2nd annual [International Sports Film Festival Houston](https://www.isffh.org/) (ISFFH.org), whose mission is to provide emerging filmmakers with a platform to launch impactful sports stories using the medium of film to inspire, educate and bring people together. The Festival is hosted by the non-profit organization [Through the Lens](https://www.throughthelens.org/) - Houston whose mission is to teach kids the power of storytelling through their own eyes, empowering them to create short films on a variety of topics affecting their communities. Partnering with community leader and CEO of [Alchemy Consulting Group](https://www.alchemyconsulting.com/), Arquella Hargrove to moderate a panel on DEI or 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion' following the film's debut, 'This is My Tennis' by Co-Director's Kevin Losani and Ahlilah Longmire of ASCOT MANOR, SPORT INC. is sure to inspire a socially conscious look at the sport of tennis and its biggest gatekeeper, money.



Ahlilah Longmire Co-Director of 'This is My Tennis' and Founder & CEO of Ascot Manor Sport Inc.

“

I am so excited to be moderating this panel that incites meaningful conversation around Tennis, sports in general, and the equity that sports brings to DEI conversations”

Arquella Hargrove, President + CEO, Alchemy Consulting Group

The panel will take place on Saturday, February 5th, 2022 at the POST Houston in our ISFFH screening room inside the X-Atrium. Panelists include: Miguel Garcia who most recently served as the Managing Director of Portland Tennis and Education to assist the organization through the COVID pandemic. Prior to that appointment he was the chief architect and lead consultant for the United States Tennis Association Foundation (USTAF) in conceptualizing and executing a national capacity building program for select chapters of the National Junior Tennis and Learning Network (NJTL),-- Entrepreneur and film writer, Ahlilah

Longmire who through extensive research - including contact with coaches and retired professional tennis players - tenacity, and a philanthropic spirit, formed a vision that would support these young players who could not otherwise afford to continue to play tennis at the higher levels, to fully develop their potential and continue on to transition to pro-tours. Her desire to help these young players fulfill their dreams has now found expression in what she regards as her greatest accomplishment to date, Ascot Manor, and panel Moderator Arquella Hargrove, CEO and Founder of Alchemy Consulting Group, based in Houston, TX.

The free event (ISFF Houston) is open to the public and will feature over 16 documentary films throughout the weekend including our opening film Friday night Feb. 4th Another Shot: Stephon Marbury's career in China, Salute - 1968 Olympics, Big Time Soccer: The Remarkable Rise & Fall of NASL, Yasmeen as well as others. A series of panel discussions with professional athletes, sports executives and filmmakers will take place after some of the documentary screenings. If you can't join us in person, ISFFH will be launching the virtual aspect of the film festival Saturday Feb 5th-Sunday Feb 13, please visit ISFFH.org for the full lineup of films and events.

Tennis, for over a century, has been one of the most elite and glamorized sports in the world. This makes it one of the most difficult individual sports to succeed in. With more than 100,000 kids competing in junior tournaments by the age of 15, less than 300 young prospects will ever make it to a professional tournament in the U.S. This Is My Tennis examines the journey, the cost, and the hardships that some of the top young prospects in the U.S are facing along with revealing the sacrifices families make in order to give their kids an opportunity to fulfill their dreams. Only the strong will survive - This Is My Tennis. co-Directed by Kevin Losani and Ahlilah Longmire.



Meet Arquella Hargrove CEO of Alchemy Consulting Group, 'This is My Tennis' Panel Moderator



Learn More About the International Sports Film Festival at isffh.org

Founder, Josh Merwin states, "I continue to be amazed at the quality and depth of film topics that get submitted to ISFFH. My goal in starting this festival was to give filmmakers a platform to launch their films. Because of community leaders like Arquella and filmmakers like Ahlilah, ISFFH is able to harness the power of film to bring people together, educate our audience and make a positive impact in society. We are activating activism through film, bringing powerful sports stories that transcend life. Our venue, POST Houston is quickly becoming the epicenter in our city for culture and creativity and we are thrilled to present these films in this historical venue.

Also to be noted: Barbara Charline Jordan was an American lawyer, educator and politician who was a leader in the Civil Rights Movement. A Democrat, she was the first African American elected to the Texas Senate after Reconstruction and the first Southern African-American woman elected to the United States House of Representatives.

Arquella is a firm believer in giving back, both to her profession and to her community. She serves on the Girls Inc of Greater Houston and the Adult Reading Center boards, and has served on the following boards- Houston chapter of the Association for Talent Development, Community Family Centers, Passages for Women, and Bridge Over Troubled Water. She is a graduate of the Leadership Houston Class XXX and the United Way's Project BluePrint Class XXVII and continues to play an active role in the Houston chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). Participating in this panel as a moderator is what Arquella loves to do and, "I feel honored and blessed to be one of the voices leading and moderating important conversations pertaining to DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) across many corporate, entertainment, and cultural audiences and platforms." ~ Arquella Hargrove, CEO, President, Alchemy Consulting Group.

Other events taking place during the Festival include rooftop yoga, a car show by Team Savage, soccer activations by Sphere Soccer and women's self defense class, an indoor marketplace with over 40 vendors and live sports viewing parties.

The worlds of art and sports come together with the NFTs. Celebrating Houston's impact in the sports and tech worlds, ISFFH will present NFT's created by former Texan Garrick Jones. Internationally recognized local artist and Houstonian Betirri (<https://betirri.com>) and ISFFH NFTs



Founder of the International Sports Film Festival Houston, Josh Merwin

will allow you to participate in our VIP programming throughout the year all via tax-deductible donations.

The NFLPA Athlete Lounge will be an area for sports enthusiasts. We will have interactive games, networking events, an athletic shoe exhibit by local sneaker head Lawrence Walton (@coffeewitdafoe) and fans will interact with former NFL players such as Houston Texan, Garrick Jones, former New York Jet Ryan Yarbrough and many others.

Children of all ages are welcome to enjoy family-friendly activities including inflatable sports games, kid's car races, a screening of the film Cars and other sports activities.

Thursday and Sunday there will be virtual screenings and events for sports lovers to enjoy from home. Visit ISFFH.org to register for the virtual film festival.

For a full calendar of film screenings and events please visit www.isffh.org.

ABOUT AHLILAH LONGMIRE: No stranger to the world of Sports, Entertainment, Music, and Fashion, Ahlilah has been a recognized industry leader for more than 17 years. She is the Founder of The Tesla Group, the lifestyle PR-Marketing & Events agency established in 2008, and is widely recognized for representing and developing brands for top athletes, producing events, tours, and a wide range of productions, and driving national & international PR campaigns. As an Entrepreneur and competitive tennis player, Ahlilah observed how large numbers of skilled junior players were forced to drop out of the competitive tournament circuits after they had worked their way up the ranks in Harlem, New York. Through extensive research, including contact with coaches and retired professional tennis players, she formed a vision that would support these young players, who could not otherwise afford to continue to play tennis at the higher levels, to fully develop their potential and continue on to transition to pro-tours. Her desire to help these young players fulfill their dreams has now found expression in what she regards as her greatest accomplishment to date, Ascot Manor.

ABOUT KEVIN LOSANI: Kevin is an independent producer, director, cinematographer, editor and VFX artist. Known for making narrative films, documentaries, music videos and sketch comedy, his purpose for telling stories is to create something entertaining and thought-provoking.

ABOUT MIGUEL GARCIA: Miguel Garcia is an international consultant based in Houston, Texas. He most recently served as the Managing Director of Portland Tennis and Education to assist the



'This is My Tennis,' an insightful film addressing racial inequality in the sport of Tennis co directed by Kevin Losani and Ahlilah Longmire

organization through the COVID pandemic. Prior to that appointment he was the chief architect and lead consultant for the United States Tennis Association Foundation (USTAF) in conceptualizing and executing a national capacity building program for select chapters of the National Junior Tennis and Learning Network (NJTL). The six year program was awarded a Humanitarian ESPY in 2014 for best training initiative. He previously served as the National Director of Field Operations for the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA). While at PCA he supervised the link between national headquarters and local chapters. In this capacity he groomed a growing number of chapters as they developed and matured their respective operational platforms. This included resource development, partnerships, program delivery, board engagement and local staffing. Prior to joining PCA, Miguel led two local non-profit organizations; served in both local and federal government; and created a new portfolio while serving as a deputy director and program officer at the Ford Foundation in New York City. His program expertise includes community development; economic development; youth development; affordable housing; public space and recreation; cultural development; urban planning, public health and social investment.

ABOUT ARQUELLA HARGROVE: For nearly two decades, Arquella Hargrove has been helping transform organizations with powerful business solutions, both as an internal team member and an external facilitator. After beginning her career on the human resources teams of corporate and nonprofit organizations, Arquella excelled for several years at one of the world's largest HR consulting firms. Over the last 15-plus years, she has built a vibrant clientele covering a broad range of industries, including accounting, education, government, healthcare, legal, nonprofit, oil and gas, and is certified in multiple assessment tools. Arquella offers a unique combination of analytical expertise and proven people skills in transforming evaluation results into real-world solutions. She is also a Certified Personalysis Assessment Practitioner, Certified Mediator (Harris County Dispute Resolution Center), Professional in Human Resources (PHR) (HR Certification Institute), Vital Smarts, Crucial Conversations Certified Facilitator, Cultural Intelligence, and Unconscious Bias Certified Facilitator. Arquella holds a bachelor's degree in human resource management from Ottawa University and an executive MBA from Texas Women's University. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. Arquella is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Houston Downtown, and the lead Instructor for the Certified Public Manager Program at the University of Houston School of Public Policy. For more information, visit: <http://www.arquellahargrove.com>.

ABOUT JOSH MERWIN: Josh Merwin has always viewed the world through different eyes. Weighing 4 pounds at birth, he was always smaller than his friends and constantly looking up at the world around him. At 8-years old, Merwin found a \$20 bill on the ground and was looking for the perfect toy to spend it on. Disappointed that he couldn't find the perfect toy, Josh's eyes lit up seeing a Polaroid camera. Since that moment, Josh has captured the world from his unique perspective. Merwin brought his passion for photography to the University of Colorado by studying Journalism & Film. Moving forward he combined his mom's passion for photography and his dad's love of sports to build his own passion for telling sports stories. This would define both his career path shooting for Sports Illustrated, ESPN the Magazine and the New York Times. Most people would think that Josh's story would end there because he had achieved his dreams,

but he just kept dreaming bigger. After spending 15 years as a photographer and filmmaker in NYC, Josh returned to Houston in August of 2020 to launch the International Sports Film Festival Houston. It would also allow him to help other creatives chase their dreams. The platform we have created will celebrate stories of athletes in a way that can not only benefit the community, but also be a way to encourage movement through sports entertainment.

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