

"OnBoard" Wins Prestigious Jury Award Highlighting Contributions of Black Women in Corporate America

The groundbreaking documentary "OnBoard" garners widespread acclaim as it secures the Jury Award: Social Impact Stories at the 2023 Essence Film Festival.

SAN FRANCISCO , CA, UNITED STATES, July 11, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The thought-provoking documentary "OnBoard" has received widespread acclaim as it clinched the Jury Award: Social Impact Stories during the 2023 Essence Film Festival. The film, which chronicles the evolution of board diversity and the impact of Black women in American corporate spaces, has captivated audiences and shed light on their remarkable journey.

Directed by renowned filmmaker Deborah Riley Draper of Coffee Bluff Pictures, "OnBoard" celebrates the journeys of Black women who have shaped the corporate landscape. From the pioneering efforts of Patricia Roberts Harris in 1971 to the present day, the documentary showcases the inspiring trajectory Black Women on Boards (BWOB), the global organization co-founded by Merline Saintil and Robin Washington.

"Don't be afraid to be the first," Saintil tells audiences. "And when you're the trailblazer, just make sure you're not the last." Long before becoming co-Executive Producer of the film, Saintil knew she wanted to create something impactful, to benefit future generations. "I stand on the shoulders of so many who poured themselves into my journey," she says, "and I want to always pay it forward."

Reflecting on her own experience, Shannon Nash, co-Executive Producer of "OnBoard," recognizes the importance of supportive role models. "Having professional mentors/supporters, including my father, who often took me to his law school classes, was instrumental in shaping



Executive Producers of OnBoard, Shannon Nash and Merline Saintil

my aspirations," Nash explains. She adds, "I literally could see it to believe it and I want to do that for others." Together, Saintil and Nash have channeled this desire to "lift as you climb" to help inspire and support the next generation through this award-winning documentary.

Saintil expressed her motivation for creating the documentary, saying, "I started Black Women on Boards (BWOB) to build an ecosystem for accelerating outcomes for Black women who often lack visibility, network access, and sponsorship." Our members include women who already serve on boards and those who are board ready but lack visibility and access. Through referrals and word of mouth, we have grown from just 18 members in October 2020 to over 200 members globally. The success of BWOB in board placements and mentoring the next generation was a driving force behind bringing this story to a wider audience.



L-R Executive Producer Merline Saintil, Director Deborah Riley Draper, and Executive Producer Shannon Nash

Nash also shared her perspective on the film's significance, stating, "I knew this story needed to be shared with the world. I wanted to shed light on all these incredible stories of Black women who have shaped the corporate landscape in America, often against great odds." Nash's introduction of Saintil to Deborah Riley Draper during a weekend spa trip set the wheels in motion for the groundbreaking documentary.

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"OnBoard" takes viewers on a captivating year-long journey, capturing pivotal moments such as the women ringing the bell at NASDAQ and the New York Stock Exchange. Through the struggles and triumphs depicted in the film, audiences are presented with an inspiring and

eye-opening portrayal of the remarkable achievements of Black women in corporate America.

The Jury Award received by "OnBoard" recognizes the film's powerful message and its potential

to create a positive impact. Saintil expresses her gratitude, stating, "To have 'OnBoard' chosen for this honor is a true testament to the power of the film and its message." Nash adds, "We are incredibly thankful to the entire team at Essence, particularly festival directors Lamonia Brown and Hakeem Holmes, for believing in this film and providing a platform for films like this to be showcased."

To learn more about "OnBoard" and its impact, please visit the official website at www.onboardthefilm.com.

About Merline Saintil

Merline Saintil, a former Silicon Valley tech COO, has taken six companies public and serves as Lead Independent Director of Rocket Lab, a space exploration company. As a Fortune 100 director and investor, she brings a wealth of experience to her role as co-Executive Producer of "OnBoard." For more information, visit: www.merlinesaintil.com

About Shannon Nash

Shannon Nash, an award-winning filmmaker and public company board member, brings her expertise as a tech CFO, attorney, and CPA to her role as co-Executive Producer of "OnBoard." Her film "Colored My Mind" previously won the American Pavilion Film Award at Cannes. Shannon also was recently named "one of the most Influential Women in Silicon Valley", by Silicon Valley Business Journal, June 2023. For more on Shannon, visit her [IMDb](#) page.

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