

Winners of The 30th Annual Student Showcase of Films Announced

JUPITER, FL, UNITED STATES, May 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The 30th Annual Palm Beaches [Student Showcase of Films](#) (SSOF), Florida's largest student film competition and award show, proudly announces this year's class of winners. Twenty-one winners were selected from a record-breaking 617 submissions from 85 schools across Florida that showcase the incredible creativity of the state's emerging talent. A luminous buzz filled the air and echoed the brilliance of this year's pearl-inspired theme that highlighted SSOF alumni with a look back at "Where they are now."



The 30th Annual Palm Beaches Student Showcase of Films, Florida's largest student film competition and award show, class of winners.

The Maltz Jupiter Theatre set the stage for the event, where guests arrived in style "shinning bright in white." Upon stepping into the theater, attendees captured unforgettable moments at the 360° camera and along the interactive living white carpet. Welcoming guests was Palm Beaches TV (PBTv) personality, Cindy Hing, host of Fest Quest in The Palm Beaches and Day Tripping in The Palm Beaches, who wore a custom-designed dress created for the milestone celebration.

Frank Licari, three-time Emmy-nominated host and award-winning entertainer, producer, writer, musician, actor, and star of South Florida PBS' On the Town in The Palm Beaches with Frank Licari hosted the live show and led with an entertaining opening performance and film. Celebrity presenters included hip-hop artist, actor, and television host, Vanilla Ice; DJ Newmark, known as the legendary throwback king and of the Grammy Award, Platinum recording The Funky Bunch; hailing from Riviera Beach, FL, NAACP Award-winning actor Jevon White; news anchors Matt Lincoln from WPEC CBS 12 and Tania Rogers from WPVT News Channel 5 and WFLX FOX 29.

Event presenters also included Chad Renfro, producer of Oscar-nominated Killers of the Flower Moon; Laurence Gartel, one of the 54 SSOF judges and the official artist of the 57th Annual Grammy Awards and sponsor of the 2026 Poster Design award. PBTv stars Kitty Lundan of

What's Poppin' PBC? presented the High School Feature Short award; James Currie of Hooked on The Palm Beaches presented the Environmental PSA award and Jacqueline Journey of Passport to The Palm Beaches presented the Suzanne Niedland Documentary Award.

Palm Beach County Administrator Verdenia Baker was presented with a Legacy Award for her 38 years of illustrious service to the County, her steadfast support of the entertainment production industry, SSOF and her passionate advocacy of young creatives. County Mayor Maria Marino delivered welcoming remarks and Erika Constantine, Senior Vice President of Marketing at Discover The Palm Beaches presented the Palm Beach County Tourism PSA award.

The finalists, along with their families, friends, teachers, cast, and crew were celebrated in front of a live, standing room only audience of nearly 700 people at the Maltz Jupiter Theatre. The audience experienced firsthand the outstanding level of talent found in Florida's high schools and colleges. More than \$30,000 in scholarship money, prizes, and customized signature trophies were awarded.

An emotional highlight of the morning was the presentation of the coveted Burt Reynolds Scholarship, named after the late actor and industry mentor who originally founded the showcase venue in 1978 as an iconic dinner theater. The 2025 winner of the Burt Reynolds Scholarship, Ryan Markovitz, of A.W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts, moved the SSOF Scholarship Committee, who praised his cinematic instincts and sophisticated talent in directing and editing.

Last year, Palm Beach State College student Riley Phillips won the Mel Maron Scholarship. This year, her portrayal of the Olivia Rodrigo song "Bad Idea, Right?" earned her the Vanilla Ice Music Video Award. Wilderley Mauricette, a two-time finalist, took home the first place College Feature Short award. Additionally, as nominated by the students, Michael Jacques of Film Acting with Michael Jacques was honored with the Teacher of the Year Award and \$1,000.

The winners of the 30th Annual Palm Beaches Student Showcase of Films are:



The SSOF is the cornerstone of the Palm Beach County Film and Television Commission's (FTC) education outreach, celebrating Florida's student filmmakers since 1995.

Burt Reynolds Scholarships

Burt Reynolds Scholarship (\$5,000) – Ryan Markovitz, A.W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts (West Palm Beach)

Film Florida Sara Fuller Scholarship (\$1,000) – Reagan Bresnahan, Seminole Ridge Community High School (Loxahatchee)

Mel Maron Scholarship (\$1,000) – Shayla Stillwaggon, Seminole Ridge Community High School (Loxahatchee)

Gray Family Scholarship (\$1,000) - Rachel Hunter, Seminole Ridge Community High School (Loxahatchee)

Dr. B. Carleton Bryant Scholarship (\$1,000) – Martine McQueen Francois, G-Star High School of the Arts (Palm Springs)

College Feature/Short Awards

1st Place (\$2,000) – Wilderley Mauricette, Ringling College of Art and Design (Sarasota), Curtain Call

2nd Place (\$1,500) – Joshua Bowen, Florida State University (Tallahassee), Fine Dining

3rd Place (\$1,000) – Almendra Kovač Akel, Ringling College of Art and Design (Sarasota), ROT

High School Feature/Short Awards

1st Place - Riley Walsh, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (Parkland), Afterglow

2nd Place - Ava Nepola, West Broward High School (Pembroke Pines), What Happened to Me

3rd Place - Narciso Reyes, Miami Arts Studio (Miami), Shed of Secrets

Suzanne Niedland Documentary Award (\$2,000)

Ross Widener, University of Central Florida (Orlando), Ghost of the Marsh

Vanilla Ice Music Video Award (\$1,000)

Riley Phillips, Palm Beach State College (Lake Worth), Bad Idea, Right?

Animation Award (\$3,000)

Sponsored by: Five Peaks Animation

Elena Serenko, Ringling College of Art and Design (Sarasota), The Red Heel

Keep Palm Beach County Beautiful Environmental PSA Award (\$1,000)

Jadon Alexander, Paxon School for Advanced Studies (Jacksonville), Save the World, Together

Commercial PSA Award (\$1,000)

Katelyn Lackner, Pompano Beach High School, Reconnect with You

Nellie & Fred Chasin Screenwriting Award (\$1000)

Luke Panzo, Lynn University (Boca Raton), We'll Meet Again

Poster Design Award (\$1,000)

Sponsored by: Laurence Gartel

Samantha Garcia, SouthTech Academy (Boynton Beach), Retro Film Poster

Palm Beach County Tourism PSA Award (\$1,000)

Sponsored by: Discover The Palm Beaches

Mary Vail Vasquez, Violette Narcisse, Autumn Muckle, Palm Beach Gardens High School (Palm Beach Gardens), The Palm Beaches are Paradise

Teacher of the Year Award

Michael Jacques, Film Acting with Michael Jacques (Fort Lauderdale)

Congratulations to all of this year's winners! The submission window for the 31st Annual Palm Beaches Student Showcase of Films opens in October 2025. Stay tuned for updates and read more details at: pbfilm.com/SSOF.

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