

2008 PROGRAM BOOK DEDICATION: **Celebrating 25 Years of Flickers**

It was around 1979 that I started thinking about creating a small film society whose sole purpose was to discover and screen classic, foreign, and cutting edge film. I had picked up a book entitled "How to Organize and Run a Film Society," and I played with the idea over the next several years. In 1982, I formalized my ideas and created "Flickers—The Newport Film Society." It was very much a "Field of Dreams" experience: I built it and people came. Our first screening took place at the then-named Van Alen Casino Theatre in Newport. The screening was in January 1983. The film was Fellini's "Amarcord." One hundred seventy five people showed up and from there, Flickers was launched.

Flickers held the state's first International Film Festival in Newport in 1983, which laid the foundation for today's Rhode Island International Film Festival. During its first five years exhibiting film, Flickers screened more than 475 titles, of which many were state and regional premieres. Some examples that demonstrate the breadth of films exhibited include "Amadeus," "Flight of the Eagle," "The Man from Snowy River," "Parting Glances," Truffaut's "Confidentially Yours," Bergman's "Fanny & Alexander," Fassbinder's "Querelle," Franco Zeffirelli's lush "La Traviata," Bertolucci's uncut "1900," the premiere of the independent film "Coaster," the restored print of Gloria Swanson's epic "Queen Kelly," Fellini's "And the Ship Sails On," and "My Beautiful Laundrette."

The society sponsored specialized film series, lectures, and forums including one at the screening of "Man of Iron," which featured Cheslaw Kyanka, founder of the Polish Solidarity Union. The Society also presented lectures for colleges and organizations on topics from Italian Neo-Realism to film programming. It even organized travel programs to study international media centers in New York, San Francisco, London, Paris, and Athens.

Over the past 25 years, Flickers has changed directions, taken detours, and charted new routes. The organization has been impacted by the hard work, vision, and commitment of so many people that it would be wrong to personally take credit for where we are today. No one person is responsible for the success of what was originally envisioned as a way to meet people, make friends, and share a common love of film. Some of these people have actually been with us for this quarter century. Others have drifted in and out, some have moved on, but all have been touched in some way by this organization.

Today, programming efforts cover a broad range of areas - from arts to humanities to social services - multiple linkages and collaborations have been established. Flickers has evolved with the changes, needs, and demands of the community it serves. It has never lost sight of its mission, and continues its quest to create inventive and cutting-edge programming.

It has been an amazing adventure and one that was completely unforeseen at its beginning.

This year's dedication is to all the people who created Flickers and sustained it over the past 25 years. It's a long, long list of wonderful people. All are linked by a passion and commitment you cannot find anywhere else: the love of film that served as Flickers' founding inspiration. My sincere thanks!

George T. Marshall.
Executive Director