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BLACK PUBLIC MEDIA TO HONOR SAM POLLARD AT PITCHBLACK AWARDS

Veteran documentary filmmaker to receive the BPM Trailblazer Award on April 25

NEW YORK (December 20, 2023) — [Black Public Media](#) (BPM) will pay tribute to veteran filmmaker **Sam Pollard** at its PitchBLACK Awards on Thursday, April 25. The ceremony, taking place at the Stanley H. Kantor Penthouse of Manhattan's Lincoln Center, caps BPM's seventh PitchBLACK Forum — the largest pitch competition of its kind in the United States for independent filmmakers and creative technologists who create Black content. PitchBLACK kicks off on Wednesday, April 24 with participants competing for awards of up to \$150,000 in production and distribution awards for stories about the Black experience.

A multiple Emmy- and Peabody Award-winning producer-director-editor, Pollard is known for his work on a plethora of important works including: *Eyes On The Prize*, *Maynard*, *MLK/FBI*, *Lowndes County and the Road to Black Power* and *Mr. SOUL!* He also has served as an editor on Spike Lee's *Clockers*; *Mo' Better Blues*, *Jungle Fever*, *Girl 6*, *Bamboozled* and *Four Little Girls*. This year alone, the prolific filmmaker's works include *Carlos* (Prime Video), about the famed guitarist Carlos Santana; *Max Roach: The Drum Also Waltzes* (PBS), about the legendary jazz drummer and composer, which just won a 2023 International Documentary Association (IDA) Best Music Documentary Award; and *South to Black Power* (HBO), about journalist and author Charles M. Blow's call for Black people to reverse-migrate to the South as a strategy for Black Liberation.

Pollard joins the ranks of previous BPM Trailblazer Award winners: **Orlando Bagwell**, **Joe Brewster**, **Yoruba Richen**, **Michèle Stephenson** and **Marco Williams**, all fêted for their long-standing work, primarily in public media, as a producer, director, writer or editor, and for having a strong track record of mentoring the next generation of media makers.

"Sam has continuously brought to life urgent Black stories that need to be seen and studied, crafting films that preserve the history and beauty of so many aspects of American culture," said **Leslie Fields-Cruz**, executive director of BPM. "He has also helped to prepare a new wave of truly talented storytellers. It's time for all of us to give him the flowers he deserves."

As part of BPM's PitchBLACK Trailblazer celebration, a select slate of Pollard's films will be showcased in a special film retrospective. The program features a combination of in-person and virtual screenings as well as a conversation with the filmmaker. BPM will announce details about the screening locations, dates and films included in the Sam Pollard PitchBLACK Trailblazer Retrospective in the spring.

BPM is a Harlem-based national nonprofit which funds and distributes original content, and produces compelling work, including its signature series *AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange*.

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PitchBLACK 2024 — which draws a who's who of the documentary film and emerging media worlds including executives from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, PBS, Netflix, Paramount+, Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Sundance Institute, Third World Newsreel, Tribeca Film Institute, Women Make Movies and more — is sponsored by Netflix, with additional support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. For information about other sponsorship opportunities, contact DeLynda Lindsey, BPM's grants and reports specialist, at DeLynda@blackpublicmedia.org.

To learn more about BPM, visit blackpublicmedia.org, and follow the organization and watch the events of PitchBLACK at @blackpublicmedia on Instagram and Facebook.

ABOUT...:

Sam Pollard has spent more than three decades chronicling the Black experience as a feature film and television video editor, and a documentary producer/director. His first assignment as a documentary producer came in 1989 on Henry Hampton's Blackside production, *Eyes On The Prize II: America at the Racial Crossroads*. His contribution to the series earned an Emmy Award. In the years since, Pollard's prolific body of work has won multiple industry accolades including: three Primetime Emmys, two Daytime Emmys, one News & Documentary Emmy, four Peabodys — including the 2021 Career Achievement Award, a 2023 IDA Best Music Documentary award for *Max Roach: The Drum Also Waltzes* and a 1998 Oscar nomination for *Four Little Girls*. *Four Little Girls*, a feature-length documentary about the 1963 Birmingham church bombings, is just one of Pollard's numerous collaborations with Spike Lee. In 2020, Pollard was named among Black Public Media's prestigious list of 40 public media Game Changers in celebration of the organization's 40th anniversary. His most recent releases, *The League*, about the Negro baseball league; and *Max Roach: The Drum Also Waltzes*, premiered in 2023.

Black Public Media (BPM) supports the development of visionary content creators and distributes stories about the global Black experience to inspire a more equitable and inclusive future. For more than 40 years, BPM has addressed the needs of unserved and underserved audiences. BPM continues to address historical, contemporary, and systemic challenges that traditionally impede the development and distribution of Black stories. For more information, visit blackpublicmedia.org and follow BPM on Instagram and Facebook and @BLKPublicMedia on Twitter.

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