**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Visit our press page for more information and downloadable images:*

url

**INDIE LENS POP-UP PRESENTS STANLEY NELSON’S**

***TELL THEM WE ARE RISING:***

***THE STORY OF BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES***

***\*<Insert Your City> SCREENING TO FEATURE Q&A WITH <Insert Partners or Speakers>\****

(<Insert your city, state>)— Indie Lens Pop-Up, presented by ITVS, *Independent Lens*, and <insert your organization (organization website)>, are excited to present ***Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities***, which explores the pivotal role historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have played over the course of 150 years in American history, culture, and identity. The film reveals the rich history of HBCUs and the power of higher education to transform lives and advance civil rights and equality in the face of injustice. The latest film from director Stanley Nelson (*Black Panthers, Freedom Riders*), America’s foremost film chronicler of the African-American experience, ***Tell Them We Are Rising*** brings to life the powerful story of the rise, influence, and evolution of HBCUs. Co-directed and co-produced by Marco Williams, the film premieres on *Independent Lens* on Monday, February 19, 9:00-10:30 PM ET.

A haven for Black intellectuals, artists, and revolutionaries — and a path of promise toward the American dream — HBCUs have educated the architects of freedom movements and cultivated leaders in every field while remaining unapologetically Black for more than 150 years. These institutions have nurtured some of the most influential Americans of our time, from Booker T. Washington to Martin Luther King, Jr., W.E.B. Du Bois to Ralph Ellison, Toni Morrison to Oprah Winfrey, Alice Walker to Spike Lee to Common.

In addition to the broadcast, *Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Black Colleges and Universities* is the centerpiece of a yearlong multi-platform effort called HBCU Rising. Featuring national partnerships (including The Black College Fund, Color of Change, Akila Worksongs, Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), Thurgood Marshall College Fund, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., United Negro College Fund, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Blackout for Human Rights and The Campaign for Black Male Achievement), exclusive events, StoryCorps audio stories, video shorts, an HBCU campus tour and a crowdsourced HBCU Digital Yearbook, HBCU Rising will examine and celebrate the legacy of HBCUs. For more information, visit [HBCURising.com](http://www.hbcurising.com).

**WHAT:** FREE preview screening of *Tell Them We Are Rising* followed by a community discussion about <insert details about your engagement activity>

**WHO:**Presenters: Indie Lens Pop-Up, <insert your organization and additional partners>

**WHEN**: <insert event date and time>

**RSVP:** <insert a link or contact info if RSVP is available>

For more information, visit: <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/tell-them-we-are-rising/>

**About the Filmmakers**

**Stanley Nelson** **(Director/Writer/Producer)** has been acknowledged as one of the preeminent documentary filmmakers of our time. He has directed and produced over 12 documentary features including *Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution, Freedom Summer, Freedom Riders, Jonestown: The Life and Death of People’s Temple and The Murder of Emmett Till.* Nelson has won every major award in broadcasting. In 2016, he was honored with a Lifetime Peabody Award, a Lifetime Emmy Award and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Documentary Association. He is a 2014 National Humanities Medalist, multiple Emmy Award winner, MacArthur “Genius” Fellow, and member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. He holds a BFA from City College of New York, and Honorary Doctorates from Duke University and Haverford College. He has taught documentary film production at Howard University, Brooklyn College, and the University of California, Berkeley and guest lectured at universities and film schools around the world.

Nelson is co-founder of Firelight Media, a nonprofit production company dedicated to using historical film to advance contemporary social justice causes, and to mentoring, inspiring and training a new generation of diverse young filmmakers committed to advancing underrepresented stories.

**Marco Williams (Co-Director/Co-Producer)** is a filmmaker and a film educator. He is an Arts Professor at New York University, Tisch School of the Arts, Undergraduate Department of Film and Television. His directing credits include *The Black Fives, The Undocumented, Inside the New Black Panthers; Banished; Freedom Summer; I Sit Where I Want: The Legacy of Brown v. Board of Education; MLK Boulevard: The Concrete Dream; Two Towns of Jasper; Making Peace: Rebuilding our Communities; The Spiritual Deficit* and T*he American Dream; In Search of Our Fathers; and From Harlem to Harvard.* His awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship, a George Foster Peabody Award, the Alfred I duPont Silver Baton, the Pan African Film Festival Outstanding Documentary Award, the Full Frame Documentary Festival Spectrum Award, and the National Association of Black Journalists First Place Salute to Excellence.

**Marcia Smith** **(Writer)** served as president of Firelight Media for most of its first decade. During her tenure, Firelight produced over 18 hours of film for national broadcast on PBS and garnered every major award in television, including multiple Primetime Emmy, Peabody, Sundance, duPont, and International Documentary Association (IDA) awards. She has written numerous films for PBS including *Wounded Knee, Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple, Marcus Garvey: Look for Me in the Whirlwind* and *The Murder of Emmett Till* for AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, and *Beyond Brown and Running: The Campaign for City Council* for WNET. She has also written a documentary on OJ Simpson for HBO Sports, and the acclaimed book *Black America: A Journey in Photographs*, published by Thunder Bay Press. She received the award for Best Nonfiction Writing from the Writers Guild of America and a Prime Time Emmy nomination for *Emmett Till*.

**About Indie Lens Pop-Up**

Indie Lens Pop-Up is a neighborhood series that brings people together for film screenings and community-driven conversations. Featuring documentaries seen on PBS's *Independent Lens*, Indie Lens Pop-Up draws local residents, leaders and organizations together to discuss what matters most, from newsworthy topics, to family and relationships. Make friends, share stories, and join the conversation. Can't attend in person? Find [*Independent Lens* on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/independentlens) for information on our online Pop-Up events.

**About *Independent Lens***

*Independent Lens* is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS Monday nights at 10:00 PM. The acclaimed series, with Lois Vossen as executive producer, features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding from PBS, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more visit [pbs.org/independentlens](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens). Join the conversation: [facebook.com/independentlens](http://www.facebook.com/independentlens/) and on Twitter [@IndependentLens](http://www.twitter.com/independentlens).

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