

## Member Spotlight: Angela Andrist



*Photo by Tajudin Ali*

**How did you get your start in the industry? What influenced you to enter into the Entertainment world?** My start in the industry that thrust me into the limelight was winning The Best Film by an Emerging Filmmaker at the Moving Pictures Film Festival in 2008. I vividly remember the year before being inspired watching these award winning filmmakers when they were interviewed on TPT. I literally envisioned myself sitting in their place, thinking I could do it. It wasn't until I was in a documentary storytelling class at IFP that I was encouraged to actually try. I didn't think I could make my first documentary in 4 weeks (and in iMovie) to even make the submission deadline. I guess I was wrong, and the "the rest was history" cliché rang true.

**What is your educational background?** My formal educational background a Bachelor of Arts from St. Ben's in liberal studies armed me with an open and broad palette from which to create. While taking Documentary Bootcamp class at IFP, I had asked my teacher and mentor, Melody Gilbert, if in my early 40's, if it would be beneficial to go to film school. She had said, no, just go and make films. So I found other places and ways to learn and hone my craft, and have also been blessed by the numerous filmmakers and photographers that have taught and helped me on my filmmaking journey.

**What are you currently working on?** I'm currently collaborating as a co-producer and director, on a pilot for a web-series with chef and food writer, Mecca Bos, about local chefs and the Twin Cities' food scene.

**What is your favorite story to tell about working in this industry?** It's hard to pick a fave story working in the film industry, but a comical one that gave me great perspective on stardom, was when I was an extra in The Prairie Home Companion movie. I thought watching take after take of Meryl Streep and Lily Tomlin singing on stage, as country western singers from Oshkosh Wisconsin, would be enough of a great memory, but I never anticipated that between takes, Lily would try to crack up the ultimate professional, Meryl, saying if she continued to act so silly, she'd take away one of her Oscars. At one point, the director, Robert Altman, who sat in the back on the theater, with his deep modulated voice amplified by a mic, sounded like the voice of God in the Ten Commandments, said we'd need to move on to the next scene with Lindsey Lohan. And after a long pause, Meryl walked up to the mic on stage and said, "Bob, her name is Lindsey Lohan."

**What is your most memorable/favorite project?** My most memorable project was The Top Secret Life of Sgt. Mary Lou Flaa, a documentary about a top secret stenographer under Eisenhower. During the interviews, I was amazed at what a gifted storyteller this 91 year was and as she told the story of literally running into an officer, Clark Gable, when she was stationed in London. Before our eyes filming she turned into a giddy school girl. It made me realize how the process of filmmaking can be as gratifying for me (and those I film), as what we create and ends up preserved on film.

**What inspires you?** Storytelling inspires me. Gutsy women as storytellers inspires me more. Being a female producer/director in the industry is tough and we're a very small percentage, so sticking with it to show our perspective and be counted in the film industry means a lot. Kathryn Bigelow became the first woman to win the Best Director award in 2010, really?!

**What are some of your hobbies and interests?** My other hobbies and interests, writing and photography, keep me in the vein of storytelling and the visual arts. I also have a love of quality made vintage costume jewelry and birding to observe and be rejuvenated by nature.

**Where do you see yourself in 5 years? In ten?** In 5 years, I hope to grow my Whole Journey Productions company and continue to make well-made documentaries and promotional videos, and also have time to write and direct narrative films with courageous and complex female lead characters. In 10 years to generate enough income and funding to flourish in the film industry in order to hire and generously compensate other talented women as collaborators, performers, and crew; so they can also be creative and make a living in the film industry.

**What advice would you offer to a young female looking to get into this industry?** I would tell a young female looking to get into this industry as a producer/director you must be willing to learn and do everything and anything to be successful. And you need to be nice doing it, and always act respectfully and professionally. Having fun and enjoying your team along the way is what makes the collaboration of filmmaking magical.

**If you could work with anyone (dead or alive) who would it be and why?** If I could work with anyone dead or alive, I'd choose Bette Davis, an acting genius. Although she was accused of being difficult to work with (I imagine coming mostly from men, since she told them what she actually thought and was often right) she was one of the most versatile and talented actresses ever on the big screen. If you don't believe me, revisit "All About Eve," "Now, Voyager," and "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane".

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