

For Release November 19, 2007

Gaithersburg City Honors Sikh Woman Filmmaker

Gaithersburg, MD. On October 28 the City of Gaithersburg hosted a screening of the award



Mayor Sidney Katz honoring Director Harpreet Kaur

winning film, “The Widow Colony,” directed by Harpreet Kaur. The event was held at Gaithersburg High School, where Kaur is an alumnus. Gaithersburg’s Multicultural Affairs Committee hosted the event to create an understanding and appreciation of Gaithersburg’s many cultures through education and outreach.

Mayor Sidney Katz honored Kaur for her courage, dedication and contribution to human rights and for her pursuit to expose the suffering of the November 1984 Sikh widows and their battle for survival and justice in India.



(from left) Producer Manmeet Singh, Mayor Sidney Katz, Director Harpreet Kaur

“I applaud Harpreet Kaur and Sach Productions for producing “The Widow Colony.” I found it to be a haunting experience that truly educated me.” - Mayor Sidney Katz

Along with the City, Montgomery County Public Schools Board of Education also commended Kaur’s work. On behalf of the MCPS Board of Education, Nivea Berrios expressed the importance of the film. “As Co-Chair of the City of Gaithersburg

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Mayor
Sidney A. Katz

Acting City Manager
Jim Arnoult

Council Members

Jud Ashman Cathy C. Drzyzgula Henry F. Marraffa, Jr. Michael A. Sesma Ryan Spiegel

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Multicultural Affairs Committee, I am very proud to see the fine production directed by one of Montgomery County Public Schools graduates. It is very important for our committee to promote understanding, respect and appreciation of other cultures through community education. We all need to be aware and educated on the suffering and struggle for survival of these widows and their beloved children. It was an honor for me to be part of the presentation.”

“*The Widow Colony – India’s Unsettled Settlement*”, borrows its name from a settlement in Tilak Vihar on the west-side of New Delhi that is commonly known as the Widow Colony or *Vidhva Colony*. Along with testimonies of the widows and images of the death and destruction that followed the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the film conveys the intensity of the tragedy that occurred 21 years ago. It takes an in-depth look into the lives of the women whose husbands were killed in the anti-Sikh massacre in November 1984.



Widow of November 1984 Sikh massacre

Kaur shared her heart-filled experience of making the film and the universality of human suffering. “Be it the widow of the 1984 massacre or a widow of the Rwandan genocide, for me it’s one people. I’ve vowed to become the voice for the voiceless and forgotten. I speak through my camera lens and I hope to reach out to the masses.”

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Kaur has been successful spreading the stories of the widows. “The Widow Colony” has had the honor of touring several film festivals. It was the first Sikh film to be shown at the



Female Eye Film Festival

Smithsonian in Washington D.C. and it also screened at the American Film Institute (AFI) in Silver Spring. It was at the Calgary Premiere in Canada that drew nearly 900 viewers. At the Female Eye Film Festival it won the Best Documentary award and at the International South Asian Film Festival it was given the highest honor of Favorite Film Over-all, along with the Best Documentary award.

“It’s crucial for people around the World to not only embrace each other’s differences, but to know their history, and this film becomes a tool to create that dialogue, and events such as these become the platform to bridge our differences.” – Harpreet Kaur

Linda Plummer, Chair of the Multicultural Affairs Committee, echoed the voice of the viewers with her concluding remarks.



"This experience has given all of us a deeper understanding and appreciation of all cultures that have been subjected to inhumane and violent treatment. Together as a nation we have so much more in common than we really do at odds." - Linda Plummer

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“The Widow Colony” is a Sach Productions presentation. Sach Productions is a leading media organization that aims at creating documentaries and narrative films to bring minority issues into the mainstream media. For additional information on the film you can visit www.thewidowcolony.com or contact the filmmakers by sending an email to info@sachproductions.org.

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