



## DeVoe L. Moore Center

### Symposium on Filmmaking, Education, and Public Policy

#### Information Brief for Potential Partners & Affiliates

#### About the Symposium:

On **FEBRUARY 9TH, 2021**, The DeVoe L. Moore Center at Florida State University is hosting our annual symposium on Filmmaking and Public Policy in February with a focus on education reform. We will be screening and analyzing the 2019 film *Miss Virginia*, directed by R.J. Daniel Hanna and executive produced by Nick Reid. Our symposium will include the following sections and each panel will be followed by a Q&A:

■ **Filmmaking and Storytelling Panel | 2:30 — 3:30PM | [Click Here to Register](#)**

A discussion with Executive Producer Nick Reid and film Director Daniel Hanna about the creative process and how public policy influences filmmaking from a creative perspective. They will discuss how film and other creative projects are important vehicles for policy reform and nonpartisan discussions.

■ **Screening of *Miss Virginia* | 4:00 — 6:00PM | [Click Here to Register](#)**

A live screening of *Miss Virginia*, offered in-person at the FSU student theater (ASLC) and online via Zoom for virtual participants.

■ **Public Policy Panel on School Choice | 6:30 — 8:00PM | [Click Here to Register](#)**

A collaborative conversation about education policy in Florida and the nation including leading policy experts.

#### Engaging Our Audience:

The symposium is founded on Florida State University's core values of *Inspired Excellence* and *Dynamic Inclusiveness*. Achieving these goals requires the passionate participation of our audience at FSU and beyond. To foster a mutually beneficial relationship, we hope our affiliate organizations and individuals will consider avenues such as professional education credits or extra credit for academic coursework.

#### Why *Miss Virginia*?

*Miss Virginia* follows the real story of an inner-city single mother who is financially barred from providing a better education for her 15-year-old son. The movie features her legal fight for School Choice and school vouchers in Washington, D.C.: a fight that opens the door to conversations about policy, reform, rhetoric, and civil advocacy. The film expertly illustrates the multidisciplinary nature of a complex issue that warrants analysis from multiple perspectives.

#### How To Get Involved:

Participation in our symposium will look different for every affiliate. You and your organization may become involved in the following ways:

- Attending the event either in-person or online.
- Sharing the event with organizations and individuals that may have an interest.
- Providing people with benefits beyond attendance, including extra credit for students.
- Engaging with our social media platforms to receive and share updates about the event.



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### Panel Descriptions and Panelists:

**Filmmaking and Storytelling Panel | 2:30 — 3:30PM | [Click Here to Register](#)**

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■ **Panel Description:**

We'll spend an hour with *Miss Virginia*'s executive producer **Nick Reid**, director **Dan Hanna** and Miss Virginia herself to discuss the creative decisions and business considerations behind the production of this feature film. We will also be joined by [FSU Film Professors, Dr. Antonio Mendez](#) and [Jed Kaleko](#)! What made Virginia Walden's story so compelling? What did they hope audiences would take away from the movie? What challenges did they face in getting the story to the silver screen? This interactive session will include Q&A from the audience and social media in real time. This panel will be moderated by denter director [Dr. Samuel Staley](#).

**Screening of *Miss Virginia* | 4:00 — 6:00PM | [Click Here to Register](#)**

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■ **Screening Description:**

Based on a true story, *Miss Virginia* stars Emmy® winner Uzo Aduba as a struggling single mother who is losing her fifteen-year-old son to the rough streets of Washington, DC. Unwilling to see him drop out and deal drugs, she places him in a private school. But when she can't afford tuition, she launches a movement to change the system that is destroying him and thousands like him. Attacked and threatened by those who don't want change—from corrupt politicians to the local drug lord—Virginia must discover depths of strength she never knew she had.

**Public Policy Panel | 6:30 — 8:00PM | [Click Here to Register](#)**

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■ **Panel Description:**

We'll spend time with a panel of education policy experts to discuss the future of school choice in Florida and the nation. Florida was one of the first states to adapt broad-based school choice reform in the 1990s. Has school choice improved outcomes? Or simply become an albatross around the necks of real reformers? Moderated by **Bill Mattox**, director of the J. Stanley Marshall Center for Education Options at the James Madison Institute, the panel of policy experts will include political scientist **Dr. Sharon Wright Austin** of the University of Florida and education policy and leadership expert **Dr. Stacey Rutledge** from Florida State University. The panelists will grapple with hard questions and the newest evidence of accountability and student success in charter schools, conventional public schools, private school vouchers, and other reforms. The panel will be live streamed and include Q&A from a live audience in person as well as online.

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### **Panelist Bios**

[Dr. Sharon Wright Austin](#) is Professor of Political Science at the University of Florida. Her research focuses on African-American women's political behavior, African-American mayoral elections, rural African-American political activism, and African-American political behavior. She is the author of *Race, Power, and Political Emergence in Memphis* (Garland 2000); *The Transformation of Plantation Politics in the Mississippi Delta: Black Politics, Concentrated Poverty, and Social Capital in the Mississippi Delta* (State University of New York Press 2006); and *The Caribbeanization of Black Politics: Race, Group Consciousness, and Political Participation in America* (State University of New York Press 2018). She has also published articles in the *National Political Science Review*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Social Science Quarterly*, the *Journal of Black Studies*, and *Politics and Policy*, as well as several book chapters. She is currently editing a book entitled *Political Black Girl Magic: The Elections and Governance of Black Female Mayors* (Under Contract, Temple University Press).

[Virginia Walden Ford](#) is one of America's leading advocates for parent empowerment. As a student, a mother, an advocate, and a grandmother, Virginia has spent her lifetime fighting to create new educational opportunities for children and families. A native of Little Rock, Arkansas and the daughter of two public school educators, Virginia and her twin sister, Harrietta, were among the first 130 students chosen to desegregate Little Rock's high schools in the mid-1960s. While she was raising her three children in Washington, D.C., Virginia was worried that her own son, William, was falling through the cracks of a system that wasn't focused on the best interests of children. In 1998, she took action, forming a grassroots organization, D.C. Parents for School Choice. Along with a group of dedicated parents, Virginia went door-to-door, neighborhood-to-neighborhood, recruiting and training thousands of other parents to stand up for their children's futures. In 2003, with the support of national education organizations and lawmakers, Virginia and her parent advocates succeeded in convincing Congress and President George W. Bush to enact the nation's first-ever Opportunity Scholarship Program for low-income children, a program that set into motion a complete overhaul of Washington, D.C.'s education system. This program provides scholarships for low-income children to attend private schools, while boosting federal funding for traditional public schools and public charter schools. Since the program's inception, thousands of students have received Opportunity Scholarships, and the program boasts a 91 percent high school graduation rate. After the program's passage, Virginia worked to encourage families to learn more about their school choice options, conducting information sessions across the city. Later, she played a key role in the Congressional reauthorization of the program. After winning several awards for her advocacy efforts, Virginia shared her advice and experiences in her book, *Voices, Choices, and Second Chances*. Her second book, *School Choice: A Legacy to Keep* was published in 2019.

[R. J. Daniel Hanna](#) is a Toronto-born, Arkansas-raised writer, director, and editor. He has directed commercials for Coca-Cola, Subway, Cole Haan, and numerous other brands, but his true passion is independent cinema that can ignite social change while delivering a powerful human story. His feature screenplays have received dozens of awards and accolades, with his script *Shelter Animal* making the Top 50 Scripts (out of 8,000) in the Academy of Motion Pictures' Nicholl Fellowship. His short film *Shelter*, starring Clea DuVall (*Argo*, *Zodiac*) and April Grace (*Whiplash*, *Magnolia*), played at the SAG Short Film Showcase and won the Audience Award from the NewFilmmakers LA festival, among other accolades. His most recent award-winning film, *Everything*, is based on a true story of a mother searching for a bone marrow donor for her daughter. It was featured in the *Wall Street Journal* and is spurring reform in the marrow donation industry. Working both in narrative and documentary form, Hanna also brings an editor's eye to his sets. Films he has edited have won awards from the Emmy Foundation, the Director's Guild of America, BAFTA, the USC Editing Faculty, the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, and dozens of film festivals. Hanna is repped by the Gersh Agency and Luber-Roklin Entertainment.

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[Jed Kaleko](#) is a Filmmaker in Residence (Production Design) in the College of Motion Picture Arts at Florida State University. Mr. Kaleko's expertise includes a wide range of technical aspects of film production and design. He has served as a graduate committee member on more than 100 film productions at Florida State University.

[William Mattox](#) currently serves as the Director of the J. Stanley Marshall Center for Educational Options at The James Madison Institute. In this role, he works with a wide variety of researchers, policymakers, educators, and parents to promote innovative reforms designed to make it possible for all K-12 students to obtain a high-quality education tailored to their unique needs, interests, aptitudes, and learning styles. Over the course of the last three decades, Mattox has written numerous articles on education-related issues for a number of leading publications, including The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, and USA TODAY (where he is a long-time member of the Board of Contributors); presented expert testimony on education-related issues before legislative committees in Washington and in a number of state capitals; spoken at major education conferences around the country and at international meetings in Prague, Geneva, and Rome; served as an interim headmaster at a private school and led writing workshops at Duke, Vanderbilt, the University of Virginia, and other prominent universities; written supplemental curriculum guides on civic virtue, including one which won a national SPNovation Award from the State Policy Network (SPN); and directed a documentary film and a number of education-related video shorts, including a feature story which won a 2015 Spark Freedom national award. In recent years, Mattox has been honored by the Positive Coaching Alliance at Stanford University for his work promoting character development in youth sports and by the University of Georgia as the recipient of its Henry Grady Distinguished Alumni Award.

[Antonio Mendez](#) is a Filmmaker in Residence (directing) in the College of Motion Picture Arts at Florida State University. Mendez is an accomplished producer and director whose work has been recognized by the Sundance Institute, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, and the Mediterranean Film Fund. He is the co-founder of Aqui Y Alli Films. He earned his BA from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid in Spain and masters degrees in screenwriting and directing from Columbia University and producing from the University of California at Los Angeles.

[Nick Reid](#) is a film producer and the Moving Picture Institute's executive vice president. He is responsible for shaping and executing fundraising strategy; working on MPI Original productions, and also serves as a member of the executive team. His executive producer credits include A PIECE OF CAKE, THE PERFECT ONE and MPI's forthcoming Original feature documentary, 3 DIMENSIONS. He is a graduate of Indiana Wesleyan University and holds a certificate in management from Georgetown University. Prior to joining MPI, Nick was the executive vice president of a nonprofit organization where he oversaw development operations and student leadership development programs.

[Dr. Stacey Rutledge](#) is an Associate Professor in the Educational Leadership/Administration and Educational Policy and Evaluation programs in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. She has a Master of Arts in Teaching social studies degree from Brown University and a Ph.D. in education from the University of Chicago. Her research focuses broadly on understanding how the work of administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, and students is nested within institutional and policy environments and how different approaches to school reform shape school practices and student outcomes. She is currently serving as a Project Investigator for the [National Center for Scaling Up Effective High Schools](#) (NCSU), a center that has as its purpose identifying the programs, policies and practices that make some urban high schools particularly effective and working with these districts to scale these practices. As part of the NCSU work, she is a recent grantee of a U.S. Department of Education Investing in Innovation Fund grant to continue to scale a joint academic and social emotional innovation called Personalization for Academic and Social Emotional Learning with NCSU partners, Broward County Public Schools. Her research has been published in the American Educational Research Journal, American Journal of Education, Leadership and Policy in Schools, and Teacher College

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Record. She has been an author and co-editor on several volumes, most recently of *The Infrastructure of Accountability: Data Use and the Transformation of American Education* published by Harvard Education Press. She was a high school social studies teacher before getting her doctorate. At FSU, she teaches Qualitative Methods courses, Instructional Leadership, Policy to Practice, as well as Applications of Policy in Schools, among others.

[Dr. Samuel R. Staley](#) is director of the DeVoe L. Moore Center in the College of Social Sciences and Public Policy. Sam has extensive experience in public policy, starting his first public policy think tank in 1989. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, he was a leader and policy expert on education reform as Vice President for Research and then President of The Buckeye Institute. In addition to writing numerous policy reports and briefs on school choice and K-12 school finance, he provided expert testimony before the Ohio Senate and Ohio House of Representatives as well as the US Congress. His research has appeared in leading academic journals, including *Economics of Education Review* and *Constitutional Political Economy*. More recently, his research interests in pop culture have led to the books *Contemporary Film and Economics* and *The Beatles and Economics*. His book on the Beatles won a gold medal, first place, in the Business Books category of the 2020 President's Awards sponsored by the Florida Authors and Publishers Association. The author of more than 100 film reviews, [Sam is a film critic](#) for the Independent Institute in Oakland, California.

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