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ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY UNITES WITH *GEENA DAVIS INSTITUTE ON GENDER IN MEDIA* TO IMPROVE FEMALE PORTRAYALS IN FAMILY FILMS

New Study Identifies Scope of Gender Inequity; Spotlights Barriers & Misconceptions; Unites An Industry

HOLLYWOOD, CA – Get ready. Family films as we know them are about to change for the good. Entertainment media are a powerful cultural force, shaping public opinion and making a strong social impact. Yet, until now, no one has ever asked the male and female content creators to tell the cold, hard truth --- about why it is that women and girls are so grossly misrepresented in family films. Nor has anyone ever motivated and informed these influencers how to overcome barriers and misconceptions in order to find solutions; until now.

Announcing the latest study commissioned by *The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media* (GDIGM): ‘[*Changing the Status Quo: Industry Leaders’ Perceptions of Gender in Family Films*](#),’ by Stacy L. Smith, PhD, at USC’s Annenberg School for Communications and Journalism. Before ‘*Changing the Status Quo*’ was released to the public -- in a show of unprecedented, industry-wide support -- 300 of Hollywood’s leading executives, directors, producers, writers, researchers and content influencers united at the Institute’s *Second Gender in Media Symposium* (December 2010) to hear the research findings and key insights and best practices from industry leaders such as: **Geraldine Laybourne**, Chairman of the Board, Alloy Media; **Vinny Bruzzese**, President, Ipsos OTX Motion Picture Group; **Don Hahn**, Producer/Director, Walt Disney Studios; **Laeta Kalogridis**, Producer and Writer; **John Lee Hancock**, Director and Writer; and **Linda Woolverton**, Writer, Erin Fuller, President, Alliance of Women in Media, Linda Simensky, VP Children’s Programming PBS, Nancy Kanter, General Manager, Disney Junior Worldwide and Gina Girolamo, SVP Alloy

Entertainment. Sponsors and attendees included: **The Annenberg Foundation, CAA, CBS, Disney/ABC, Nickelodeon, and Sony Pictures** amongst many others.

“I am proud to be a part of an industry that cares so deeply,” says **Geena Davis**, Academy Award winning actor and Institute Founder. “Our previous studies demonstrated that there is a severe gender inequity problem. Our latest research shows that change is possible and that the industry supports it and is motivated to correct it, and improve the quantity and the quality of female characters.” ‘*Changing the Status Quo*’ is a follow up to the Institute’s previous study also authored by Smith, ‘*An Examination of Gender On Screen and Behind the Camera in G, PG, and PG-13 Films,*’ which shows that within films especially geared towards children and families, female roles remain not only scarce, but highly sexualized, stereotyped, and marginalized. “This is an issue that has burdened the film industry for decades.”

‘*Changing the Status Quo*’ shows that content creators are aware of gender imbalance in family films. It demonstrates that content creators believe gender equality is important, and not that difficult to attain, given the appropriateness of the storyline. Notes Executive Director, Madeline Di Nonno, “When entertainment execs first learn about the results from our research studies, they are usually surprised. We are confident that we are becoming an influencing factor in this new movement. People forget that people in the entertainment community care about kids too. Many of them are parents themselves.”

Following the symposium, the Institute conducted a survey of the executive attendees. Of those responding to the survey, 90% of content creators said that what they learned would influence how they now perceive gender balance and stereotypes in their own work. Over 98% stated they would share their new outlook and knowledge with peers. “Given that exposure to stereotypical media portrayals can have negative effects on developing youth, it was encouraging to learn that content creators are open to stories with balanced character portrayals of males and females in family films,” noted Stacy Smith.

Adds Ms. Davis, “We all need to foster confidence, enthusiasm and achievement in kids. If they see it, they can be it. With the support that we are getting from such a wide array of powerful and influential studios, networks and leading content creators -- all passionately united for a common goal -- we are transforming how the industry thinks about gender in children’s entertainment and what the consumer will end up seeing on screen.”

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About The Geena Davis Institute On Gender In Media...

Founded in 2004, The Geena Davis Institute On Gender In is the only organization working within the entertainment community to develop impactful solutions to improve media images for girls and reduce gender stereotyping in all aspects of entertainment targeting children 11. The Institute utilizes research, education and advocacy to engage, and sensitize the entertainment industry and the public about the impact of gender in media. For more information: www.seejane.org

Geena Davis Inspiring Change...

*A long-time advocate for women, Davis is recognized for her tireless efforts on behalf of girls and women nearly as much as for her acting accomplishments. She serves on the Board of Directors for the **White House Project** and has partnered with the **Women's Sports Foundation**, including ten years as a Trustee, advocating for girls’ rights and equal participation in sports and supports Title IX. Davis serves on **California Commission on the Status of Women** and is a partner with **UN Women** in the effort to change the way media represents women and girls globally.*