



SEVEN OAKS
EDUCATION FOUNDATION INC.

Foundation

NEWS

Summer 2017

From Phantom to Philanthropy: How a Cult Film Lead to a Donation for Education.

What does a cult film from 1974 have to do with the Seven Oaks Education Foundation? More than you might think.

In 1974, 20th Century Fox released director Brian DePalma's musical opus unlike any other. The film was called *Phantom of the Paradise*, and it was a flop almost everywhere. One of the few places it took hold, however, was Winnipeg.

In other parts of the country, the movie played for about a week. But in Winnipeg, it played off and on for over a year with many seeing it multiple times. The musical literally struck a chord that continues to resonate with many Winnipeggers to this day in the form of Phantompalooza.

The fan festival was created almost 10 years ago as a tribute to the film that made such an impact on so many Winnipeggers – including Rod Warkentin, a teacher at Garden City Collegiate.

“The popularity of the film took on new dimension when we hosted the event back in 2005,” recalls Rod, one of the first Phantompalooza's organizers.

Though William Finley who starred



Phantom at the Met III (October 2016). Photo Credit: Mike at www.mikelatschislaw.com. Top photo L-R: Dr. Jeffrey Comanor, Archie Hahn, Peter Ebling. Middle photo L-R: Peter Ebling, Archie Hahn, Dr. Jeffrey Comanor. Bottom photo L-R: Peter Ebling, Dr. Jeffrey Comanor, Archie Hahn. These 3 make up the 3 bands in the movie, *The Juicy Fruits*, *The Beach Bums*, *The Undead*.

as the Phantom was hesitant at first, he decided to attend the event and convinced Gerrit Graham, comic genius who played Beef, to join him.

“We were lucky enough to sell out two showings at the Garrick

Theatre, the original venue back in 1974,” says Rod. “And with the success of the event, William Finley was instrumental in convincing us to re-create the event again the following year, but this time with the whole cast.”

During this time, Rod struck up a friendship with the Finley family during his occasional visits to New York. William died suddenly and unexpectedly on April 14, 2012.

The loss of a friend who had been such a tremendous presence onscreen and off resonated deeply in Rod who started thinking about ways to honour his memory.

“I wanted to do something for his wife, Susan and their son, Dash in remembrance of William and the friendship that we had,” says Rod. “A scholarship for the arts seemed the most appropriate.”

“With Susan’s blessing, I began to organize events in Winnipeg as well as the large 40th anniversary showing in Los Angeles, which the whole cast attended and was hosted by director Edgar Wright,” says Rod.

The co-founders of Phantompalooza, Gloria Dignazio and Del Pannu created “Phantom at the Met”, an annual event at the Metropolitan theatre, and continued to raise funds for the scholarship.”

The third Phantom at the Met event in October 2016 featured Phantom-loving Winnipeggers, musical tributes and actors from the film. William Finley was also there in spirit, in the form of the memories he helped make through his work, the friendships he forged and the generosity with which people contributed to the scholarship in his name.

Just as Winnipeg honored William, The Finley family has also actively raised funds in order to confirm William’s heartfelt connection to Winnipeg,

“We continue to seek contributions so that each scholarship will help to make a difference in the life of its recipient,” says Susan Finley speaking of the scholarship.

“The fund will live on in perpetuity and will award an annual scholarship of approximately 5% of the value of the fund to high school seniors from ‘The Peg’ who wish to pursue an education in the arts.”



Photo Credit: Del Pannu. L-R: Gloria Dignazio, Craig Wallace and Dean Hunter both of Swanage band and Del Pannu on far right



Photo Credit: Del Pannu. L-R: Paul Williams, Gerrit Graham, William Finley, Archie Hahn, Dr. Jeffrey Comanor, Peter Ebling, Jessica Harper

With that in mind, you can keep up to date on Phantompalooza and all other Winnipeg-based Phantom of the Paradise celebrations at phantomoftheparadise.ca and by joining the Phantompalooza page on Facebook.

You can donate to the **William Finley Scholarship Fund** – or any Seven Oaks Education Foundation scholarship fund – by simply clicking the **“Donate Online Now”** button on the Foundation’s website (<https://www.7oaks.org/Resources/SOEF/Pages/About-Us.aspx>). You may also send or deliver your donation to the **Seven Oaks School Division Board Office** (830 Powers Street, Winnipeg, MB R2V 4E7), attention: Wayne Shimizu, Treasurer.

Please see the Winter 2017 Newsletter (on the Foundation’s website, under the “About Us”, “Newsletters” section) for How to Start a Scholarship.

Feel free to contact **Wayne** by phone at **204-586-8061** or email **Wayne.Shimizu@7oaks.org** if you have any questions.



Photo Credit: Del Pannu. L-R: Gerrit Graham and William Finley from Phantompalooza 1 event, April 2005



L-R top: Peter Ebling, Mike Navis, Gerrit Graham, Jessica Harper, Paul Williams, William Finley, Dr. Jeffrey Comanor, Archie Hahn. Bottom L-R: (tech guy), Gary (Zippy) Gurniak, Doug Carlson, Ari Kahan, Gloria Dignazio, Del Pannu, Rod Warkentin

DON'T FORGET IT'S GRAD TIME!

Graduation time is coming up fast – it will be here before you know it! So keep these grad dates in mind:

June 8	Grad PowWow
June 19	Seven Oaks Met School
June 26	Collège Garden City Collegiate
June 27	West Kildonan Collegiate
June 28	Maples Collegiate
June 29	Seven Oaks Adult Learning Centre

I Want to Give to the Seven Oaks Education Foundation Because

There are many reasons to donate to the Seven Oaks Education Foundation, and many ways to give. We invite you to donate AND share with us your reasons for donating!

- I want to establish a scholarship
- I want to establish an award
- I want to donate through a payroll deduction
- I want to leave a bequeathal
- I want to make a one-time donation
- I donated online



GET YOUR KICKS...

with our Grey Cup Raffle

SOEF board members will be selling Grey Cup raffle tickets from early September 2017 to late November.

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 Tickets will be \$5.00 each.

Come see us in person at the McPhillips location of Save On Foods on Tuesday, Nov. 14 & Thursday Nov. 16, from 5-8pm



Visit 7oaks.org/Resources/SOEF for more information on how to donate or to make an online contribution.

The Foundation provides tax receipts for donations of \$10 or more.



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