

VISIONS DU REEL NYON

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE CINEMA – INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

www.VISIONSDUREEL.CH

20-26 AVRIL 2007

SPECIAL PRIZE OF THE JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION FOR THE FILM “STATE LEGISLATURE” by Frederick Wiseman

Nyon, 26.04.07/Robin Gurney – **“State Legislature”, a film by the celebrated American filmmaker Frederick Wiseman, has won the John Templeton Foundation Special Prize worth 5'000 Swiss Francs, at the International Film festival “Visions du Réel, 20-26 April, in Nyon, Switzerland.**

The film features the Idaho State Senate and House of Representatives in Boise, Idaho, USA, and members and public who gather during the three month session. A lesson in democratic action, the film shows both legislators and public in discussions where political party posturing is practically absent but where the concerns of the public, the state and indeed the nation are carefully considered.

“State Legislature” is in a long line of documentaries by Frederick Wiseman covering a period of some 40 years, where he has focussed his camera and microphone on peoples' behaviour within institutions. In the current film, which lasts almost 210 minutes, elected representatives listen to pleas from the electorate on a variety of topics from water ownership and availability, to certification of builders, to the merits of setting-up a state heritage centre. Witnesses, such as a rabbi, a lawyer, a homemaker or an historical expert, often speak only for themselves but are always highly articulate. They are listened to carefully and sometimes cross-examined by the elected representatives.

The film demonstrates the political process tempered by the reality of a small state, responsibility towards the electorate and occasionally the utilisation of the power of individual office holders. Through judicious editing the film captures the individual personalities of each person depicted. The work of the legislature is set within the prominence given to, but also the informality of the prayers at the beginning and end of the session.

The John Templeton Special Prize is chosen by the consultant and members of the interreligious jury representing the John Templeton Foundation *“for its depiction of local democracy at work in the State of Idaho; the virtual absence of political party posturing; the broad content of the discussions; the public display of prayer and personal concern; the cinematic quality of both images and sounds; the skilful editing which encourages attention over a long period of time”.*

STATE LEGISLATURE

by Frederick Wiseman, USA 2006: colour:16mm: 217'

IDAHO FILMS INC.

Frederick Wiseman

One Richdale Ave., #4

CAMBRIDGE, MA 02140, USA

info@zipporah.com