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#TIMESUP

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ASHLEY JUDD

+ Community
Changemaker
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{ GREENWICH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL'S 2018 CHANGEMAKER }

WERED

These words, spoken by award-winning actress and activist **ASHLEY JUDD**, characterize a courageous cultural reckoning. We caught up with the Greenwich International Film Festival's 2018 Changemaker about her global humanitarian efforts, making gender parity a reality and how she'll measure the success of **#TimesUp** in the future BY RIANN SMITH

FREDERICK M. BROWN/GETTY IMAGES



FOR ANY MOVEMENT TO TAKE PLACE, AN UNCOMFORTABLE JOLT MUST RATTLE THE COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS. ASHLEY JUDD, THE FIRST CELEBRITY TO GO ON THE RECORD AGAINST HARVEY WEINSTEIN TO THE *NEW YORK TIMES* LAST OCTOBER, MADE THAT PRINCIPAL PUSH, UNEARTHING A TRUTH SO UGLY, IT COULD NO LONGER GO UNSEEN. THE RESULT WAS SEISMIC SOCIAL CHANGE: THE PURGING, BOTH VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY, OF TOXIC CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY; THE SHARING, BOTH MALE AND FEMALE, OF INNUMERABLE #METOO STORIES; THE REIMAGINING, BOTH OVERDUE AND INSPIRING, OF A GENDER-EQUITABLE WORKPLACE—MAKE THAT WORLD—NO LONGER TOLERANT OF ABUSE AND SILENCE.

Being a force for good is fundamental to Ashley's core. The proof is in the Golden Globe- and Emmy-nominated star's off-screen endeavors running parallel to her nearly twenty-five-year film and television career. Beyond her instrumental role in the Time's Up movement, she is Goodwill Ambassador to UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, whose mission is to protect the reproductive health and rights of women worldwide. It is one of many humanitarian efforts to which Ashley has devoted herself, from AIDS education to poverty prevention to wildlife conservation. More evidence of her fierce commitment to the nonprofit world: Ashley earned a master's in public administration from Harvard in 2010 and is pursuing a PhD in public policy at UC Berkeley, an

astonishing feat for perhaps anyone other than this Kentucky-bred powerhouse.

"Ashley is a strong and beautiful soul who has changed the lives of many by unapologetically standing up for things she passionately believes in," says Wendy Stapleton Reyes, GIFF's Chairman of the Board. "She believes in equality. She believes in the right for children and women to be safe. She believes that every human has the right to feel secure regardless of gender, race or socioeconomic status. We are humbled to have her as our 2018 Changemaker." In advance of the gala where she will be honored by GIFF on Thursday, May 31 at l'escalade, we had the opportunity to talk with Ashley about what it means to be a real champion for change.



Ashley at the 2017 Women's March on Washington

Q&A

GM: WHAT IS YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF HELPING OTHERS WHO DIDN'T HAVE A VOICE? HOW DID YOUR CHILDHOOD SHAPE YOU TO BECOME THE HUMANITARIAN, POLITICAL ACTIVIST AND GIFF CHANGEMAKER THAT YOU ARE TODAY?

AJ: One of my best friends in high school was being molested by a P.E. teacher. She was relaying the awful experiences to me but hadn't come to terms with telling an adult. I let her know that if she told me it happened again, I had to tell a grown up. It did, and I did. I called a pediatrician in my small hometown in eastern Kentucky, and together we decided I would go to my French teacher, a female with whom I was close, and that together we would go to the principal. Well, I did the right thing and went about it the right way. I also learned that doing the right thing can be costly; my friend and her family were furious with me for telling.

GM: DESCRIBE THE MOST POWERFUL MOMENT OR EXPERIENCE YOU'VE HAD WORKING WITH UNFPA, WHERE YOU ARE A GOODWILL AMBASSADOR.

AJ: Oh God, there are so many! Because sorrow, joy, consolation and God are interdependent, I'll share that both open trauma processing with many voices crying out, sharing stories of family rapes, murder, homes being burnt, forced migrations and dancing, singing, and having a reggae great-grandmother enfold me in her arms are just a few of the many, many highlights from Jordan, India, eastern Ukraine, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

GM: TIME NAMED YOU PERSON OF THE YEAR FOR BEING A SILENCE BREAKER. WHAT SILENCE BREAKERS HAVE INSPIRED YOU SINCE HELPING LAUNCH THE TIME'S UP MOVEMENT?

AJ: I have loved getting to know my fellow female actors better. Brie Larson is whip-smart, so motivated, a powerful self-starter...Reese [Witherspoon], of course, is a natural born leader and is a joy to watch. I love getting to know Emma Watson, a fellow Goodwill Ambassador [UN Women]. Collectively, these voices and friendships, and so many more, are as brilliant, interesting and strategic as any class I ever took at Harvard. »

GM: WHAT WAS THE TIPPING POINT THAT MADE 2017 THE PERFECT STORM FOR #TIMESUP?

AJ: I do think the publication of the *New York Times* article on the fifth of October was it. It was just...*it*. It was so well investigated and researched, so powerfully written. It packed the wallop that punched the hole through the patriarchy, through silence and impunity.

GM: WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THOSE WHO FEEL WEIGHED DOWN BY FEELINGS OF "HOW DID I LET THIS HAPPEN?" OR "COULD I HAVE DONE MORE?" AFTER BEING MOLESTED, ABUSED OR HARASSED?

AJ: It is always the perpetrators' shame; it was never our shame to begin with. Through an effective healing process, we begin to externalize that toxic shame and those savage lies that can take root when we have internalized abuse. We put the shame and responsibility back where it belongs, on the aggressor who had failed boundaries and terrible illness. We learn we are precious, empowered and free, in spite of and no matter what.

GM: HAVE SOME OF YOUR OWN EARLY EXPERIENCES OF ABUSE MADE CERTAIN ROLES MORE DIFFICULT TO PLAY, OR EASIER?

AJ: I think being a survivor leader has enhanced my work creatively. I learned you don't have to be a messed up person with unresolved angst to be a good performer, that talent and misery don't have to be twinned. I can be healing and healed; living with serenity, balance, sweetness and response; and have access, at will, to the deep wells within me. I can open the trap door to the well, dip in, then come out.

GM: IN 2016 YOU PLAYED BARACK OBAMA'S MOTHER IN THE NETFLIX FILM *BARRY*. CURRENTLY YOU STAR IN EPIX'S *BERLIN STATION*, AS THE BOSS OF THE GERMAN CIA.

HAVE YOU BEGUN TO WITNESS AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE WOMEN AND OTHER MARGINALIZED GROUPS HAVE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT?

AJ: Yes, and hopefully more so at traditional studios. Think the fabulous *Wonder Woman*, *Black Panther*, *A Wrinkle in Time*....

GM: HOW DO WE CREATE GENDER PARITY ON SCREEN?

AJ: Female writers, female showrunners. Female agents who go to bat for their clients. Female executives who voice that our art should reflect the real life demographics of the actual world...and when everyone sees factual numbers that female headed movies, and female/male co-lead movies perform better financially than male lead films!

GM: HOW WILL YOU MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF THE TIME'S UP MOVEMENT?

AJ: Wow, what a question. There are many answers. Some tangibles are a code of conduct across all our unions that ensures safety and equity on set. That agencies, management firms, studios, production companies are 50/50 male-female and that leadership is intersectional and inclusive. That awards season reflects the creative contributions of minorities. That people who behave badly have consequences, including losing their jobs when appropriate. That we have restorative justice for folks who have behaved badly, when they change, make their amends and restitution. That asymmetry of power is obsolete, rendering equally obsolete the conditions in which sexual misconduct flourishes. That men stop aggressing and having a sense of entitlement to female bodies. That we all have the gift of a healthy masculinity, with toxic masculinity being just a story we tell about the past.

10 WOMEN ROCKING REFORM

Along with Ashley Judd, these Hollywood trailblazers are changing the game for equality

REESE WITHERSPOON

The Academy Award winner drew on her vast network of friends, agents and colleagues to rally around #TimesUp and reportedly donated half a million dollars to the campaign. As keynote speaker at the Watermark Conference for Women in Silicon Valley, Witherspoon said, **"We're chopping away at this problem by coming at it the way we know how. But we cannot continue to exist in an environment where we're not represented. We will never have our rights if we do not elect more women."**

GEENA DAVIS

The *Thelma and Louise* star founded the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media in 2004 after pioneering the largest research study on gender depictions in children's entertainment media. The institute is the first and only research-based organization working within the entertainment industry to educate and influence content creators, marketers and audiences about the importance of eliminating unconscious bias,

highlighting gender balance and scripting strong female characters for children ages eleven and under.

AMERICA FERRERA

A sexual assault victim at age nine, Ferrera came forward with her story via #MeToo, and is a vocal member of the 300+ female producers, directors, actresses, agents, writers, lawyers and executives who launched the #TimesUp initiative to address sexual harassment, assault and the imbalance of the power both within and outside of the entertainment industry. In Ferrera's words: **"Ladies, let's end this silence so the next generation of girls won't have to live with this bullshit."**

SALMA HAYEK

In her unflinchingly honest *New York Times* op-ed about being harassed by Harvey Weinstein, Hayek asks, **"Why do so many of us, as female artists, have to go to war?"** The battle Hayek was forced to wage against Weinstein to produce and star in *Frida* on her own terms—without caving to his vulgar, abusive demands—took a deep emotional toll. However, her courage in sharing her story has undoubtedly helped rewrite the narrative for female actresses and producers.

EVA LONGORIA

Only one in 1,114 directors across 1,000 movies was Latina between 2007 and 2016, according to the USC Annenberg School for Communication. #TimesUp activist, director, producer and actress Eva Longoria is one of

many powerful women destined to change those numbers. She also created the Eva Longoria Foundation to empower Latinas to reach their potential through education and entrepreneurship.

FRANCES MCDORMAND

Two words: Inclusion rider. In her 2018 Oscars speech for best actress in *Three Billboards*, McDormand made it clear that her fellow actors should request inclusion riders in their future contracts. These riders can effectively hold studios accountable for maintaining diversity (in all forms) among a film's cast and crew—and penalize them monetarily if they fail to uphold their promise.

SHONDA RHIMES

Executive producer of *Grey's Anatomy*, *Scandal* and *How to Get Away with Murder*, Rhimes successfully challenged talent agency ICM to meet the goal of "50/50 by 2020," a two-year plan to create gender parity in leadership roles in entertainment organizations. More agencies, such as CAA, UTA and Vice Media pledged to follow suit. As Rhimes says on the 50/50 by 2020 website, **"Where there's equity, there's less harassment and abuse."**

MIRA SORVINO

"We want to take our activism and our power and change things for any woman, anywhere, working in any workplace," Sorvino said on the red carpet at the Oscars, where she was Ashley Judd's date. Also a victim of

harassment, Sorvino is a supporter of Equal Rights Advocates (#TakeTheLead), which lobbies for the strongest anti-harassment bills in the country. "It's a thrilling time," Sorvino said. **"Being yourself and being truthful is the best thing you can do."**

LENA WAITHE

The first black woman to win an Emmy for Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series for *Master of None*, the creator of *The Chi* is helping broaden the reach of the Time's Up movement to be inclusive of all marginalized people. Waithe has stated that she will advocate for the "50/50 by 2020" gender equality initiative in leadership to include **"people of color, queer people of color, trans people, nonbinary, all that kind of thing...You can't have someone like me at the table and me not be a voice for us."**

EMMA WATSON

The UN Women Goodwill Ambassador helped launch the #HeForShe movement for gender equality in 2014, where she gave a UN speech that included the following: **"I am from Britain and think it is right that as a woman I am paid the same as my male counterparts. I think it is right that I should be able to make decisions about my own body. I think it is right that women be involved on my behalf in the policies and decision-making of my country. I think it is right that socially I am afforded the same respect as men. But sadly I can say that there is no one country in the world where all women can expect to receive these rights." »**



{ GREENWICH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL'S 2018 COMMUNITY CHANGEMAKER }

WITH HONORS

BY RIANN SMITH

Duncan Edwards, GIFF's 2018 Community Changemaker, would be the last person to congratulate himself for helping shift the paradigm for underprivileged kids craving a top-notch education. So we will

An exceptional boy in possession of everything but opportunity, buoyed by an improbable community of benefactors, sails into Columbia University and a life of greatness. This is the story of Alexander Hamilton, but it is also that of Andres Soto, graduate of Waterside School in Stamford. Andres was the first child that Greenwich native Duncan Edwards met after taking the helm as executive director of the elementary school in 2003. "In many ways, Andres looked like so many of the generations of kids I knew at Brunswick," says Edwards, who ran Brunswick for fourteen of his twenty-five years with the school and is himself an alum. "Andres was obviously bright, athletic and, just like all the kids at Brunswick, he had big dreams. The only thing that was different was there was no guarantee that he was going to get an opportunity befitting his promise."

That's where Waterside came in. "I'm a patriot, and Waterside just showcases everything that's truly special about our country," says Edwards, who briefly ran international relief organization Americares before joining Waterside. "Children probably more doomed than destined are now certain to get a chance to do both great and generous things."

Waterside, founded in 2001 by Edwards' close friend, Konrad "Chip" Kruger, has a mission that is pure America: to be an independent school of the absolute highest quality, but instead of including a measured number of children of color or circumstance, create it exclusively for strong

families and kids who have everything but the benefit of resources. Every family at Waterside pays tuition but only as they can afford, which means every Waterside student is on scholarship and tuition covers only 8 percent of the school's operating costs.

"Somehow we have to find the other 92 percent, celebrate for five seconds at the end of the fiscal year, then start all over again," says Edwards. "In many ways, it's an independent school with absolutely everything except a guaranteed stream of revenue." In fact, the school almost closed in 2006. "We were down to our last \$25,000, and when the world went upside down in '08 it was really tough," he remembers. "We made a decision, whether it was right or wrong, that with the money we were raising we would dedicate almost every penny to the direct benefit of our children."

That benefit is most tangibly seen among the 98 percent of grads (the school runs through fifth grade) who earn admission and full scholarships to the best independent schools in the area. "Number one, we made the decision very early that we weren't trying to build a nice school for poor kids," says Edwards. "Too often, whether people like to admit it or not, in serving those we serve, the conclusion is that pretty good is plenty good. People have watered down standards and have labeled something else as success for children with less." Instead, Waterside was created as a launching pad fueled by ambition. "What we've decided to do is say there's an absolute measure of

CONTRIBUTED



CONTRIBUTED



Above right: Edwards with 2016 fifth grade graduates. (Back row) Conrad Hyde, Malik Samms, Dreden Baldeo, Jamilah Roselin; (front row) Sarah Prevot, Kayla Ferjuste

success regardless of who you are, where you come from or what your situation is; whether you're a child of privilege going to an extraordinary place like Brunswick, or you're a child with many things but without material advantage going to Waterside. We're going to all aim at the same point of excellence for every child."

Edwards, who will be honored as this year's Community Changemaker by the Greenwich International Film Festival at l'escale on May 31, would rather redirect praise to the amazing Waterside faculty, board, supporters and parents who strive to give these kids a better life. "I'm not sure I view myself worthy of any of this so we'd have to argue that," he says, chuckling. "I'd

be misleading you if I said I was a man of great vision. I found my way here by chance and like most people who get involved at Waterside, whether they work here or they support it financially, once it finds a path to your heart, it's pretty easy to be passionate about it."

It's also pretty easy to understand why both a mold-breaking school like Waterside—and an established community like Greenwich—count themselves blessed to know a man like Edwards. "I lost my dad when I was a fairly young man, and he was always big on measuring your success by the number of lives you touch with your life and reminding us that the measure of us all is what sort of footprints we leave, rather than

what things we gather along the way," he says. "The core of Waterside is that you've got kids, regardless of their circumstance, getting the chance to dream in Technicolor; and the reward will be, in time, their life outcomes. In this work, there's no ringing recognition or any want of it; you'll see there's nobody's name hanging on the walls of the school; people give and engage here because they care, or maybe better, because they can't help but care."

What's next? "The dream honestly is to make sure that this place, like all great places, is forever," says Edwards. "And to inspire others of like mind and heart to do something similar in different communities." watersideschool.org





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