



Press Release

For Immediate Release

FIRST DON HAIG AWARD WINNER GAINS ENTRY TO TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

TORONTO, ONTARIO, August 10, 2005 – Aubrey Nealon, the inaugural winner of the Don Haig Award, will premiere his first feature film *A Simple Curve* at the Toronto International Film Festival in September. The film will be one of seven world premieres in the festival's Canada First! program.

A Simple Curve focuses on the deceptions and betrayals surrounding the plans of a man (Matt Craven) to build a high-end fishing lodge. Shot in the fall of 2004 on location in the interior of BC, the 35mm theatrical feature stars Kris Lemche, Michael Hogan, and Craven and is distributed by Montreal-based Domino Films.

Nealon won the \$10,000 Don Haig Award in May, 2004. Aimed at emerging filmmakers, the Award was established in 2002 by Don's life companion Bill Schultz, his family, colleagues, and the filmmakers he so vigorously supported. The Award is a unique opportunity for members of the Canadian film and television community to "give back" in his spirit. It is an annual no strings-attached cash prize for the filmmaker – to buy some creative time, to fill a financial gap in a production, to complete a film; whatever is needed.

According to Nealon: "I received the Don Haig Award at a time when the future of *A Simple Curve* was uncertain. The award was a huge boost, not only to my personal finances, but also to my profile and that of the project. The completion of the film and the invitation to premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival is proof, I think, that Don Haig's legacy is alive and well. As a young filmmaker at a tenuous time in my career, I was supported and encouraged by the award, and I'm very grateful."

Known affectionately as the "godfather of Canadian film", Don Haig quietly helped young filmmakers throughout his career. And he knew how to pick them: *I've Heard The Mermaids Singing* directed by Patricia Rozema and produced by Alex Raffe; Oscar winner, *Artie Shaw Time Is All You've Got* directed by Brigitte Berman; *The Twist* by Ron Mann. There are many more.

This year's Don Haig Award was given to Rob Stefaniuk. Stefaniuk wrote, directed, stars in, and wrote some of the music for *Phil the Alien*, his feature directorial debut. *Phil* premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival 2004 where it received the "Spirit of Film Honor."

The Don Haig Fund accepts donations in memory of Don Haig. For more information on The Don Haig Fund and Award, please visit the website: www.donhaig.org

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