



THE GENIUS OF CARING

An engagement campaign from the filmmakers
of *The Genius of Marian*



The Genius of Marian Receives National Endowment for the Arts Grant

Grant to support The Genius of Caring

[San Francisco, CA]— National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Acting Chairman Joan Shigekawa announced today that WeOwnTV ([The Genius of Marian](#)) is one of 886 nonprofit organizations nationwide to receive an NEA Art Works grant. WEOWNTV is recommended for a \$70,000 grant to support **THE GENIUS OF CARING**, a web-based public art project designed to capture the complex emotional experience of caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's and other care intensive neurodegenerative diseases.

THE GENIUS OF CARING is a robust community engagement campaign and public art project that grew out of the documentary film, *The Genius of Marian*. The campaign is comprised of an innovative online storysharing project, a series of short films and educational resources.

Alzheimer's disease is often a long and extremely isolating disease process. And for the more than 15 million caregivers of loved ones with the disease, the isolation can be debilitating. The Genius of Caring is designed to support caregivers and to provide students, healthcare professionals and others with a glimpse into the caregiving experience. Conceiving of the project as a public art project creates the opportunity to both learn from and contribute to important conversations about Alzheimer's and caregiving.

The Genius of Caring story-sharing project captures the complex emotional experience of caring for loved ones and offers visitors a place to share stories and connect with others. Visitors to the website can navigate curated media and user generated stories that address important themes within and stages of the caregiving experience. Visitors will also be invited to share their own experiences and to learn from and connect with others. As the project grows, thousands of diverse stories will come together to create a portrait of a community connected through compassion.

The filmmaking team from *The Genius of Marian* is currently producing a series of short films, both information-rich educational shorts and story-driven portraits of individual caregivers. The shorts, which range in length from 5-8 minutes, address often-unexplored themes related to Alzheimer's dementia and caregiving while maintaining the feature film's aesthetic and story-driven approach.

The films are being integrated into our interactive website and will also be distributed widely through our partnerships with the Alzheimer's Association, PBS online, and supporters of the film including the Sundance Institute, the Tribeca Film Institute, The Fledgling Fund among others. Our goal with the project is to catalyze meaningful conversations about Alzheimer's and caregiving within families, caregiving teams and communities; to promote interpersonal connection and a deepened understanding of caregiving and Alzheimer's through arts and storytelling; and to broaden the understanding of Alzheimer's disease and family caregiving outside a clinical context for medical students, healthcare professionals and other service providers.



THE GENIUS OF CARING

An engagement campaign from the filmmakers
of *The Genius of Marian*



NEA Acting Chairman Shigekawa said, "The NEA is pleased to announce that *The Genius of Marian* is recommended for an NEA Art Works grant. These NEA-supported projects will not only have a positive impact on local economies, but will also provide opportunities for people of all ages to participate in the arts, help our communities to become more vibrant, and support our nation's artists as they contribute to our cultural landscape."

The project Director Banker White's mother Pam White has Alzheimer's disease as did his grandmother Marian Steele. Banker had this to say about the award. "There could not be a more special recognition for this project than this award from the NEA. In *The Genius of Marian*, our family's story is depicted with intimacy and honesty, offering audiences a chance to connect to and identify with us as we navigate the changes Alzheimer's has brought to our lives. My mother was a gifted therapist whose life's work was helping people dialogue about things that are difficult to talk about and my grandmother Marian was a talented artist who inspired and healed many with her stunning and beautiful art. *The Genius of Caring* project has been my way to honor both of them while also sharing what we, as a family, discovered through this process: that the only way to start making informed decisions about our own health and the health of our loved ones is to talk openly about the complicated emotions around aging and loss. Our hope is that it will make a significant contribution to sparking those all-important conversations within our families, our friends and our larger communities."

Art Works grants support the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and enhancement of the livability of communities through the arts. The NEA received 1,515 eligible applications under the Art Works category, requesting more than \$76 million in funding. Of those applications, 886 are recommended for grants for a total of \$25.8 million.

For a complete listing of projects recommended for Art Works grant support, please visit the NEA website at arts.gov.

To learn more about the project please visit our website at www.geniusofmarian.com

THE GENIUS OF MARIAN is an intimate family portrait that explores the heartbreak of Alzheimer's disease, the power of art and the meaning of family. The film follows Pam White in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease as her son, the filmmaker, documents her struggle to hang on to a sense of self. The film is a visually rich, emotionally complex story that follows Pam White in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease as her son, the filmmaker, documents her struggles to retain her sense of self.

CONTACT: Banker White e. banker@geniusofmarian.com p. 415 648 4250

###