

Award-winning director

KASI LEMMONS

will be honored by

Black History Month for her upcoming feature film *Harriet*



**GREENLIGHT
WOMEN**

GreenLight Women during

The honor is timed to celebrate the 2018 induction of her 1997 film “Eve’s Bayou” into the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress

Los Angeles, January 31, 2019... GreenLight Women, a non-profit organization that focuses on women in entertainment age 40 and over, as well as diversity and inclusion, announces its celebration of this year’s Black History Month with a tribute to Director **Kasi Lemmons**. Lemmons is currently in post-production on Focus Features’ *Harriet*, the story of abolitionist and political activist Harriet Tubman. Born into slavery, Tubman escaped and led others to freedom in the northern states through a network of safe houses known as the Underground Railroad.

The celebration will take place on **Sunday, February 17, 2019** at a special Champagne brunch at The London Hotel West Hollywood at Beverly Hills, from 11am to 2pm. A panel discussion with Lemmons will be hosted by actor **Vanessa Bell Calloway** (*Harriet, Letters From Zora*) and moderated by producer and GreenLight Women’s Diversity and Inclusion Action Group Chair, **Kimberly L. Ogletree**.

In keeping with the 2019 Black History Month theme of “Black Migrations and Social Changes.” the panel discussion will explore Lemmon’s experience making *Harriet* and the American experience of those with African-American descendants who migrated from the Deep South to an industrialized North. The Black History Month theme is set by The Association of the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH).

“We are very proud to honor Kasi Lemmons,” said Ogletree. “She is a leader who shines a light on our mission to uncover unconscious bias against women and women of color in today’s society. Kasi Lemmons is an inspiration and a beacon light for all.”

An actor and a director, Lemmons has appeared in such acclaimed films as Jonathan Demme’s *The Silence of the Lambs* and Spike Lee’s *School Daze*. Her first feature film as a writer-director, *Eve’s Bayou*, became the highest grossing independent film of 1997. It won the Independent Spirit Award for Best First Feature and Lemmons accepted a special first-time director award from the National Board of Review.

In December 2018, Lemmons received one of the film industry’s highest honors when *Eve’s Bayou* was selected as one of 25 American films chosen annually for induction into the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress because of their cultural, historic and aesthetic importance to

the nation's film heritage. Other titles chosen for the 30th anniversary of the Film Registry include *Brokeback Mountain*, *Jurassic Park* and *My Fair Lady*.

Lemmons is only the third African-American woman to be inducted into the Registry.

Harriet is the first full-length feature film made about the life of Harriet Tubman. The film stars **Cynthia Erivo** (*Bad Times at The El Royale*, *Widows*), **Janelle Monàe** (*Hidden Figures*, *Moonlight*) and **Joe Alwyn** (*The Favourite*, *Mary Queen of Scots*).

Limited tickets are available. Admission price is \$75.00. To purchase a ticket, please visit www.greenlightwomen.org.

GreenLight Women thanks it's event sponsors:
Focus Features, The Gersh Agency, Loeb & Loeb, StartTV and Virginia Film Commission

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ABOUT KASI LEMMONS

Kasi Lemmons is an actress, writer and director who has appeared in such films as Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs*, John Woo's *Hard Target*, Rusty Cundieff's *Fear of a Black Hat*, and Spike Lee's *School Daze*. Lemmons' first feature as a writer-director, *Eve's Bayou*, became the highest grossing independent film of 1997, receiving the Independent Spirit Award for Best First Feature and seven NAACP Image Award nominations, including Best Picture. In addition, Lemmons received a special first-time director award from the National Board of Review and the Director's Achievement Award at the 9th annual Palm Springs International Film Festival, sponsored by Nortel. Lemmons' sophomore feature, *The Caveman's Valentine*, opened the 2002 Sundance Film Festival, while her third film, *Talk to Me*, earned the 2008 NAACP Image Award for outstanding directing. Lemmons' most recent feature, *Black Nativity*, an adaptation of the Langston Hughes musical, was released nationwide Thanksgiving 2013.

Lemmons has worked extensively as a mentor and educator, serving as a Film Independent board member for the past 15 years while regularly contributing to its Filmmaker Labs as a speaker and moderator. Guest teaching credits include Yale University, MIT, UCLA, USC, Los Angeles Film School and The University of Pristina Film School in Kosovo. In addition to attending New York University School of the Arts, UCLA and The New School of Social Research Film Program, Lemmons was awarded an Honorary Degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, from Salem State College in 1998.

She is Associate Arts Professor in the Graduate Film Department at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and is currently developing projects for HBO, ABC, and the Opera Theater of Saint Louis.

ABOUT VANESSA BELL CALLOWAY

Vanessa Bell Calloway has earned eight NAACP Image Award nominations. She won the NAACP Theater Award for Best Actress for her role as Zora Neale Hurston in her one-woman critically-acclaimed play "Letters from Zora". Vanessa was recently invited to become a 2018 member of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences for her contribution to the entertainment industry.

Vanessa is co-starring in Focus Features much anticipated film "Harriet", featured in "Dragged Across Concrete" starring Mel Gibson and Vince Vaughn, Universal Studios feature "Unbroken: Path to Redemption," as well as an independent thriller entitled, "Thriller." Some of Calloway's other film credits include: "South Side with You", "Coming to America" "What's Love Got to Do with It", "Biker Boyz", "Daylight", "Crimson Tide", "Cheaper By The Dozen" and "The Inkwell".

ABOUT KIMBERLY OGLETREE

Kimberly L. Ogletree began her career producing hundreds of music videos for superstars LL Cool J, Stevie Wonder, Will Smith, Boyz II Men, and Public Enemy just to name a few.

Kimberly joined the BET family as Supervising Producer for Development and Special Projects where she produced several syndicated television shows, and BET specials featuring Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston and Babyface among others. In addition, Kimberly has produced numerous projects for Viacom, Universal, TV One and Bounce TV.

Kimberly's producing credits include the ten BET Arabesque films, the MTV Original Movie, Love Song, directed by Julie Dash; Ashes which won the 2010 Best Horror Film at Shriekfest; Hellraiser: Revelations for Dimension Films. Kimberly produced the faith-based film "A Beautiful Soul" starring gospel artist Deitrick Haddon, Harry J. Lennix and Lesley-Ann Brandt released through AMC Independent; 12 episodes of the comedy series "Rodney Perry's Off The Chain," for BOUNCE TV; a pilot for FUSE TV, an original dramatic series The Hustle, directed by Tim Story. Kimberly has Executive Produced the reality series; Keith Sweat's Platinum House featuring Dru Hill, along with two award winning short films, "Boxed In" directed by Tasha Smith and The Counter: 1960 directed by Tracy "Twinkie" Byrd. Recently, Kimberly produced the UMC series "Monogamy" and "Armed" directed by Mario Van Peebles, starring Ryan Guzman and William Fichtner, currently airing on Amazon.

Kimberly added another shingle to her brand Karat Entertainment International, Inc. that is positioning itself to be a global content provider of film and television with a distinctive Karat signature.

Kimberly is a graduate of Howard University. She is a member of the Directors Guild of America, Producers Guild of America, Women in Film and GreenLight Women Board Member and Chair of Diversity and Inclusion.

ABOUT GREENLIGHT WOMEN

Founded in 2016, GreenLight Women is a 501c 3 non-profit organization based in Los Angeles. It is an alliance of accomplished creative and business professionals age 40 and over whose mission is to champion women and promote diverse perspectives in media.

www.greenlightwomen.org

ABOUT FOCUS FEATURES

Focus Features acquires and produces specialty films for the global market and holds a library of iconic movies from fearless filmmakers. Current and upcoming domestic releases from Focus include *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, director Morgan Neville's documentary on Mister Rogers; Joel Edgerton's coming-of-age and coming-out drama *Boy Erased*, about a boy's true-life experience at a conversion therapy program, starring Lucas Hedges, Nicole Kidman and Russell Crowe; *Mary, Queen of Scots* with Saoirse Ronan as Mary and Margot Robbie as Elizabeth I; *On the Basis of Sex*, the real-life drama of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg starring Felicity Jones and Armie Hammer; Asghar Farhadi's Spanish-language drama *Everybody Knows (Todos lo Saben)* starring Javier Bardem and Penélope Cruz; Laure de Clermont-Tonnerre's directorial debut *The Mustang*; Jim Jarmusch's zombie comedy *The Dead Don't Die* with Bill Murray, Adam Driver, Chloë Sevigny, Tilda Swinton, Steve Buscemi, and Selena Gomez; Neil Jordan's thriller *Greta* starring Isabelle Huppert and Chloë Grace Moretz; *Harriet* about the iconic freedom fighter Harriet Tubman starring Cynthia Erivo and Leslie Odom Jr. and directed by Kasi Lemmons; and the anticipated *Downtown Abbey* movie starring the entire original cast.

Focus is part of Universal Filmed Entertainment Group (UFEG), which produces, acquires, markets and distributes filmed entertainment worldwide in various media formats for theatrical, home entertainment, television and other distribution platforms, as well as consumer products, interactive gaming and live entertainment. UFEG's global division also includes Universal Pictures, Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, Universal Brand Development, Fandango, DreamWorks Animation Film and Television. UFEG is part of NBCUniversal, one of the world's leading media and entertainment companies in the development, production and marketing of entertainment, news and information to a global audience. NBCUniversal owns and operates a valuable portfolio of news and entertainment networks, a premier motion picture company, significant television production operations, a leading television stations group, world-renowned theme parks and a suite of leading Internet-based businesses. NBCUniversal is a subsidiary of Comcast Corporation.

ABOUT LOEB & LOEB LLP

Loeb & Loeb is a premier law firm focused on helping organizations and individuals innovate, grow and evolve in a changing world. Its market-leading practice and industry teams deliver practical insight and strategic solutions in complex deals, high-profile disputes, cutting-edge regulatory issues and other

matters critical to our clients' success. The firm has nearly 400 lawyers across eight offices in the United States and Asia.

www.loeb.com

START TV

Launched in September of last year, 2018, as a new national digital broadcast network - a joint initiative of the CBS Station Group and Weigel Broadcasting. The network serves as a onestop shop for strong female character driven programming. After just over three months on the air, START TV is in over 55% of the country with over 40 affiliates. It's a broadcast network, so it's free tv, also available on multiple platforms on a market by market basis. <<https://www.starttv.com/wheretowatch/>>

New programming was announced in 2019.

³My Start Story² <<https://www.starttv.com/my-start-story/>> is an original campaign featured throughout the day on START TV that features the stories of real strong women that accompanies our programming. We feature a different voice everyday.

VIRGINIA FILM OFFICE

THE VIRGINIA FILM OFFICE is dedicated to the art and business of filmmaking. We connect clients with amazing locations, resources and creative solutions for projects of all types and sizes. From the infancy of an idea, to the emotional goodbye at the wrap party—we are your production partners throughout the entire process. The VFO is proud to be recognized as one of the most knowledgeable, effective and helpful film commissions, worldwide.

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