

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT**

Voleine Amilcar, ITVS  
415-356-8383 x 244  
voleine\_amilcar@itvs.org

Pressroom for more information and/or downloadable images:  
**<http://www.pbs.org/pressroom>**

**MISS NAVAJO  
PREMIERING FALL 2007 ON THE  
EMMY®AWARD-WINNING  
PBS SERIES *Independent Lens***

***A Revealing Documentary That Offers  
a Different Take on What it Means to be Beautiful***

(San Francisco, CA)—**MISS NAVAJO**, an affectionate and engaging look at the annual Miss Navajo pageant, will be broadcast on the Emmy ®Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens* during the 2007-08 season. Directed by Billy Luther, whose own mother was crowned Miss Navajo 1966, the film reveals the inner beauty of the young women who compete in this “celebration of womanhood.” Not only must contestants exhibit poise and grace as those in typical pageants, they must also answer tough questions in Navajo and demonstrate proficiency in skills essential to daily tribal life: fry-bread making, rug weaving — and sheep butchering.



Scenes from **MISS NAVAJO**, coming to *Independent Lens* this fall. From left to right, Crystal Frazier, 2005 Miss Navajo Nation contestant, Crystal's sister Christian and Sunny Dooley, Miss Navajo Nation 1982.

The film follows the path of 21-year-old Crystal Frazier, a not so fluent Navajo speaker and self-professed introvert, as she undertakes the challenges of the pageant. It is through Crystal's quiet perseverance that we see the strength and power of Navajo womanhood revealed. No matter who takes the crown, this is a journey that will change her life. Interspersed with pageant activities are interviews with former Miss Navajos, whose cheerful recollections of past pageants break the tension the current contestants are undergoing.

Their memories provide a glimpse into the varying roles Miss Navajo is called upon to perform: role model, teacher, advisor, and Goodwill Ambassador to the community and the world at large. For more than 50 years, Miss Navajo Nation has celebrated women and their traditional values, language and inner beauty.

As winners of the pageant, women are challenged to take on greater responsibility, becoming community leaders fluent in the Navajo language and knowledgeable about their culture and history. The film reveals the importance of cultural preservation, the role of women in continuing dying traditions and the surprising role that a beauty pageant can play.

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKER**

### **Billy Luther (Director)**

Filmmaker Billy Luther studied film at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts where he began writing and directing short films. Luther worked as an assistant for the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian-Native American Film and Video Festivals in New York. **MISS NAVAJO** is his first feature documentary.

## **ABOUT *Independent Lens***

*Independent Lens* is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10:00 PM on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community or moment in history. Presented by ITVS, the series is supported by interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. Further information about the series is available at **[www.pbs.org/independentlens](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens)**. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

-More-

## **ABOUT THE Independent Television Service (ITVS)**

Celebrating its 15th anniversary, the Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy® Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday nights at 10:00 PM on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting **itvs.org**. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.

## **About PBS**

PBS is a media enterprise that serves 354 public noncommercial television stations and reaches almost 90 million people each week through on-air and online content. Bringing diverse viewpoints to television and the Internet, PBS provides high-quality documentary and dramatic entertainment, and consistently dominates the most prestigious award competitions. PBS is a leading provider of educational materials for K-12 teachers, and offers a broad array of other educational services. PBS' premier kids TV programming and Web site, PBS KIDS Online (**pbskids.org**), continue to be parents' and teachers' most trusted learning environments for children. More information about PBS is available at **pbs.org**, one of the leading dot-org Web sites on the Internet.

###

