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***THE REVISIONARIES PREMIERES ON INDEPENDENT LENS
ON MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2013***

How Did the Most Influential School Board in the Country Become an Ideological Battleground for the Hearts and Minds of Students?

"The philosophy of the classroom in one generation will be the philosophy of government in the next." — Abraham Lincoln

(San Francisco, CA) — Every ten years a group of 15 individuals convene to discuss, debate, and rewrite the teaching and textbook standards for the next generation of students. Hugely influential, these decisions mandate how science, history, and other core subjects will be taught. Who are the people who get to shape the textbooks for our nation's students? In large part it is the members of the Texas State Board of Education, whose decisions about standards for the state's nearly five million schoolchildren hold enormous financial sway over publishers, who craft their textbooks based on the needs of their biggest buyers. Directed by Scott Thurman, *The Revisionaries* goes to ground zero in the textbook wars, a moral battleground where every word is a weapon in the fight and no child can be left behind. The film premieres on *Independent Lens*, hosted by Stanley Tucci, on Monday, January 28, 2013 at 10 PM on PBS (check local listings).

Shot over the course of three years, *The Revisionaries* follows the rise and fall of some of the most controversial figures in American education as they wage tumultuous intellectual battles. Don McLeroy is a dentist, Sunday school teacher, and an avowed young-earth creationist. After briefly serving on his local school board, McLeroy was elected to the Texas State Board of Education and later appointed chairman. During his time on the board, McLeroy has overseen the adoption of new science and history curriculum standards, drawing national attention and placing Texas on the front lines of the so-called "culture wars."

In his last term, McLeroy, aided by Cynthia Dunbar, an attorney from Houston and professor of law at Jerry Falwell's Liberty University, finds himself not only fighting to change what students are taught, but fighting to retain his seat on the board. Challenged by Kathy Miller, president of the Texas Freedom Network, a nonpartisan group that supports religious freedom and individual liberties, and Ron Wetherington, an anthropology professor from Southern Methodist University, McLeroy faces his toughest term yet.

To learn more about the film, visit *The Revisionaries'* interactive companion website (<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/the-revisionaries>), which features detailed information on

Be more



the film, including an interview with the filmmaker and links and resources pertaining to the film's subject matter. The site also features a Talkback section, where viewers can share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film, and more.

About the Filmmakers

Scott Thurman (Director), born in Lubbock, Texas, is an M.F.A. graduate in documentary film from the University of North Texas. He has worked as a news photographer for four years and produced three short films at the University of North Texas, including "Smokey," a short documentary about an Elvis impersonator that was seen in film festivals around the U.S. Thurman originally conceived of a documentary film about the Texas Board of Education for his thesis project "Standing Up to the Experts."

Pierson Silver (Producer), a founding partner of Silver Lining Film Group, has worked with cinematographers such as John Lindley (*Reservation Road*, 2001), Philippe Rousselot (*The Brave One*, 2007), John Bailey (*When in Rome*, 2010), Janusz Kaminski (*Munich*, 2005) and Matthew Libatique (*Inside Man*, 2006, *Noah*, 2013). Pierson has also performed specialty camera work on several other major motion pictures, as well as New York-based television and commercial productions such as *The Other Guys* (2010), *Shutter Island* (2010), *The Ghost Writer* (2010), *Fast Five* (2011), *Men in Black III* (2012), *RIPD* (2012), and *Walter Mitty* (2012). Pierson shot and produced the film version of the rock opera *Screen Test* (2009), which premiered at the Museum of Art and Design, and produced the short film *Trophy Wife* (2010).

Orlando Wood (Producer). Since starting Magic Hour Entertainment, in addition to *The Revisionaries*, Wood has produced *One Big Lie*, a documentary feature about Bernard Madoff's massive Ponzi scheme. He developed the feature *Welcome to the Punch* (with Eran Creevy and Beat Films), which stars James McAvoy and is scheduled for release in 2013. With a background in advertising production, he's produced over 100 ads for some of the world's most recognizable brands. He also runs Biscuit Filmworks UK, the international arm of renowned L.A. production company Biscuit Filmworks.

Jim Butterworth (Executive Producer) is the founder and president of Naked Edge Films, where he has served as executive producer for films including *Gone*, *Donor Unknown*, *War Don Don*, *The Disappearance of McKinley Nolan*, and *Cape Spin*. *Seoul Train*, which he produced, directed and shot, and which also premiered on *Independent Lens*, has been translated to more than twenty languages and broadcast on TV globally. In 2007, *Seoul Train* was bestowed the Alfred I. duPont – Columbia University Award for excellence in broadcast journalism and investigative reporting, and was runner-up for the National Journalism Award. Butterworth is a successful technology entrepreneur and investor, and an advisor to a number of nonprofits, startup companies, and investment funds. He was one of the pioneers in the streaming of audio and video over the Internet, and holds 12 issued U.S. and foreign patents in this field.

Vijay Dewan (Executive Producer) is currently a litigation associate at a large New York law firm. After graduating Columbia University, Dewan worked in the regulatory group at the law firm of Davis, Polk, & Wardwell for two years. At Notre Dame Law School, he focused on constitutional law issues, including freedom of speech and freedom of religion, and graduated

with honors in 2008. After graduating law school, Dewan played an active role in New York and national politics, including co-organizing Young Lawyers for Obama during Barack Obama's successful presidential campaign. More recently, he worked on Cy Vance's successful campaign for Manhattan District Attorney. He also worked on Kirsten Gillibrand's senatorial campaign.

Daniel J. Chalfen (Co-Producer) is a founder of and producer at Naked Edge Films. His most recent documentaries include *State 194* (for Participant Media), which premiered at TIFF 2012; *Code of the West*, which premiered at SXSW 2012; *Pretty Old*, executive produced by Joe Berlinger and Sarah Jessica Parker; *Donor Unknown* (produced with ARTE, More 4 and VPRO), which won Audience Awards at both Tribeca and Silverdocs and was broadcast on *Independent Lens*; *GONE*, which premiered at Tribeca in 2011 and was broadcast on Discovery ID; *War Don Don*, which won a Special Jury Mention at SXSW, was broadcast on HBO, and nominated for two Emmys; and *Budrus*, which premiered at Dubai then screened at Berlin, Tribeca, and Silverdocs, among other festivals, where it won an award at each. Earlier credits include *The Disappearance of McKinley Nolan*; *Meeting Resistance*, which won the Golden Award at the Al Jazeera International Documentary Festival; *Encounter Point*; *39 Pounds of Love*, which was produced with HBO Documentary Films and was short-listed for an Academy Award®; and *Pulled from the Rubble*, which became an ABC Special. Chalfen's nonfiction television series include *Happy France* for ARTE and *Ordinary People*, which was broadcast worldwide. His forthcoming films include *Silenced* and *The Life and Mind of Mark DeFriest*.

Chandra C. Silver (Co-Producer). After graduating from NYU, Silver began her career in film at Hart Sharp Entertainment (*You Can Count on Me*, 2000), *Boys Don't Cry*, (1999). Silver then worked under Arianna Bocco in the independent feature-packaging department at The Gersh Agency in New York, where she aided in the foundation of the film sales department. After her time at Gersh, Silver began her work with Mary Jane Skalski (*Mysterious Skin*, 2004, and *The Station Agent*, 2003) on Tom McCarthy's film *The Visitor* (2007), which earned an Oscar nomination for Richard Jenkins. Since beginning her work at Silver Lining Film Group, Silver has developed and produced the short film *Trophy Wife* (2010), which premiered at OutFest 2010. She is currently pursuing her MFA in film at Columbia University.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the MacArthur Foundation. The senior series producer is Lois Vossen. More information at www.pbs.org/independentlens. Join *Independent Lens* on Facebook at www.facebook.com/independentlens.

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