When SOA screenwriter Mikki del Monaco opened a fortune cookie recently, the message read, “Good news of a long-awaited event will arrive soon.” While such prophecies are predictably vague, this one was, literally, right on the money. A week later del Monaco and her directorial partner, Randall Dottin, learned that they had been awarded a $100,000 grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for the production of their feature film *Indelible*.

This is the first of two $100,000 awards that the Sloan Foundation has pledged to support first-time feature filmmakers from the Columbia University School of the Arts. This grant is the largest single award available to Columbia filmmakers in recent memory, and the first to support feature-length films.

“We are delighted to support promising young filmmakers like Mikki del Monaco and Randall Dottin and help them turn the stereotype-busting screenplay for *Indelible* into a finished film,” said Doron Weber, program director for the Sloan Foundation.

The film depicts an African-American female scientist who is in a race to find a cure for the deadly disease that took the life of her husband and threatens her teenage son. In her quest for a cure, she must balance between time in the lab and the one-in-a-lifetime moments with her son.

The goal of the Sloan Foundation’s film school program is to inspire young filmmakers to create more realistic and dramatic stories about science and technology and to challenge existing stereotypes about scientists and engineers through the visual media. “We hope that screenwriters and directors will see that science, engineering and technology are promising goldmines: wonderful, diverse characters and great stories that have gone largely untold,” Weber said.

Indelible sets out to do just that, telling a story based on science that has a deep humanity. “*Indelible* is in the tradition of films like *Whale Rider* and *Brockovich*—stories that have strong, complex females as main characters,” said Dottin. “Indelible attracted me to the script was the main character’s paradoxical circumstances. On the one hand, she spends 100 hours a week in the lab trying to make drugs that save lives, and, on the other, she is a son who is like, ‘I don’t care whose life you save—I need my room.’ She is stuck. How, as a mother, do you tell your child that he’s going to die if you don’t do something about it? I knew I had to direct this film when I asked myself what I would do.

Dottin and del Monaco hope to begin filming in Harlem in the summer of 2005, with the help of their producing partners Melanie Orans, SOA’04, “I chose to set the story in Harlem, not only because I was living there at the time, but also because it has the awesome presence necessary to harbor vulnerability and volatility inherent in the definition of home,” says del Monaco, who received an Alfred P. Sloan Screenwriting Award for the script in 2000. “I am so grateful to the Sloan Foundation for the opportunity to turn this screenplay into a feature film,” she said. “It all starts with an idea, but it takes financial support to turn the idea into a reality. This grant has helped me—from the initial screenwriting award to this production grant—to continue moving forward with *Indelible*. It has given me, in those isolated moments when it was just me and the keyboard, the stamina to rethink and repurpose this project so that it can reach its greatest potential.”

“It is exciting to be connected with the Sloan Foundation and remain connected to Columbia, especially the faculty and mentors who taught us to do this project,” Dottin said. “The attention from this grant will help us raise the additional funds needed for production.”

Dottin, SOA’03, has already received acclaim for his thesis short film, *A-Atike*. In 2003, he was named Best African-American Filmmaker by the Director’s Guild of America. He took second place in the National Board of Review for Motion Pictures Award, and was a finalist in the HBO Short Film competition at the American Black Film Festival. The film premiered on HBO in December.

**Loyd Motz Dies, 94**

Loyd Motz, Columbia professor emeritus of astronomy, well-known educator, and author or editor of about two dozen books, died on March 14. He was 94.

Motz, who was born in 1910 in Susquehanna, Pa., graduated in 1930 from City College of New York before coming to Columbia University to work on his doctorate in physics, which he received in 1936. Motz then began his decades-long teaching career at Columbia, sharing his wisdom in courses on introductory astronomy, astrophysical sciences, and celestial mechanics as a lecturer in the School of General Studies. He was appointed assistant professor in 1950, associate professor in 1954, full professor in 1963 and professor emeritus in 1977. In the 1970s, Motz hosted a series on WABC-TV called *Exploration of the Universe*. He also taught at other institutions, including City College, Queens College, Polytechnic University and the New School. Until 1992, he mentored high school students in a program he helped initiate in 1959—Columbia’s Saturday morning Science Honors Program. Motz was also a mentor to Columbia student Julian Schwingner, who won the Nobel Prize in 1965 for the theory of virtual particles.

Motz also is credited with founding the Pfi Beta Kappa society in General Studies. “Some of my students would become astronomers or novelists, and they took astronomy because Columbia has a science requirement,” Motz once said. “But some were so overwhelmed with the beauty of science that they wanted to continue.”

**Professor Garvey Dies at 61**

Glenda Garvey, a professor of medicine, and he was instrumental in setting up the computer network at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center. When Columbia decided to eliminate the School of Nursing to cut costs, Bendixen stepped in to argue for its continuation. A professorship in the School of Nursing is named for him. As professor and chairman of anesthesiology, he published several scholarly papers on respiratory and circulatory physiology, the clinical problems of hypoxia and respiratory failure, intensive care medicine, and the cost effectiveness of health care. The Department of Anesthesiology established the Henrik H. Bendixen Professorship to honor his contributions.

When he stepped down in 1989, he became senior associate vice president for health sciences and senior associate dean of the Faculty of Medicine until his retirement in 1994, when he was named professor emeritus of anesthesiology.

**Henrik H. Bendixen, Dead at 80**

Henrik H. Bendixen, 80, former vice president of the Columbia University’s medical, dental, nursing, and public health schools, died April 11 at his home in Rancho Mirage, Calif.

“Henrik brought rare qualities to the position of vice president and dean, and he made even rarer contributions to the University,” said Gerald D. Fischbach, executive vice president of Columbia University Medical Center. “We extend our condolences to his family and friends and pledge to continue to honor his legacy to Columbia University.”

Bendixen was born in 1923 in Fredriksberg, Denmark, and graduated from medical school at the University of Copenhagen. He completed his internship and residency in Denmark and Sweden, interrupted briefly by a tour of duty during the Danish Hospital Ship in Korea.

Bendixen joined the faculty of Columbia’s College of Physicians & Surgeons in 1953 as professor and chairman of anesthesiology and director of the anesthesiology service at Presbyterian Medical Center. He eventually was named the E.M. Papper Professor of Anesthesiology.

His leadership of Columbia’s health sciences division—as vice president for medical affairs from 1973 to 1983 and dean of the Faculty of Medicine—began in 1984. His tenure was marked by a growing reliance on information technology, and he was instrumental in establishing the computer network at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center. When Columbia decided to eliminate the School of Nursing to cut costs, Bendixen stepped in to argue for its continuation. A professorship in the School of Nursing is named for him. As professor and chairman of anesthesiology, he published several scholarly papers on respiratory and circulatory physiology, the clinical problems of hypoxia and respiratory failure, intensive care medicine, and the cost effectiveness of health care. The Department of Anesthesiology established the Henrik H. Bendixen Professorship to honor his contributions.

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