UC SANTA BARBARA

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MOVIE PREMIERE TO BENEFIT UCSB CENTER FOR FILM, TELEVISION, AND NEW MEDIA AND SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Making "Moonlight Mile," the latest film from director Brad Silberling, was a long and intensely personal experience for the UC Santa Barbara alumnus. Not only did he write the movie -- in many ways he lived it.

The film, whose Santa Barbara premiere (7:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 19, Paseo Nuevo Cinema) benefits UCSB's Center for Film, Television, and New Media and the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, has its roots in the death of Silberling's girlfriend, actress Rebecca Schaeffer. Schaeffer, television's "My Sister Sam," was murdered by a deranged fan near her home in Los Angeles in 1989. "Moonlight Mile" stars Academy Award-winners Dustin Hoffman, Susan Sarandon, Holly Hunter and emerging talent Jake Gyllenhaal.

Tickets cost $10 and are available at UCSB's Department of Film Studies (805-893-2347) and at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival office (805-963-0023). The premiere begins a new era of cooperation and collaboration between UCSB and the Film Festival, which is now under the direction of another UCSB alumnus, Jon Fitzgerald, founder of the Slamdance Film Festival.

Silberling, whose other credits include "City of Angels," "Casper the Friendly Ghost," and "Judging Amy," will talk about the odyssey of getting his film made and will take questions from the audience following the showing.

Some cast members are also expected to attend.

In "Moonlight Mile," Silberling tells the story of a young man (Gyllenhaal) whose waitress fiancée has died in an accident at work. In an effort to be the dutifully bereaved husband-to-be he believes he is expected to be, he moves in with his fiancée's parents (Hoffman and Sarandon) and joins them in a legal battle for justice in her case. But suddenly, he finds himself falling in love with another woman.

In its advertising, Touchstone Pictures calls "Moonlight Mile" "an emotional tale of disarming honesty and unexpected humor, a story about waking up to life, letting go, and discovering that love comes in the most unexpected circumstances."

"The film is pretty unusual," Silberling said. "By Hollywood standards today, it's a real character piece, sort of a laugh-cry movie. Its characters are very human; its story is very human."

UCSB's planned Center for Film, Television, and New Media will provide state-of-the-art facilities and equipment capable of studying everything from silent films to the latest in digital media and satellite communications. It will include a 325-seat public theater, a 150-seat instructional theater, a production suite, a digital media research laboratory, and climate-controlled film and television archival space.

The complex is scheduled to break ground in 2005, pending voter approval of a state bond initiative, and will serve an estimated 4,500 students in some 17 academic disciplines each year.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.