



Uniformed Services University
of the Health Sciences
4301 Jones Bridge Road
Bethesda, MD 20814-4799

Release No.09-02-04

February 9, 2009

Contact: Office of External Affairs

Voice: 301-295-3981 Fax: 301-295-3757

Email: kenneth.fragar.ctr@usuhs.mil

News Release

Film about Military Medicine nominated for “Oscars of Health and Medicine”

BETHESDA, MD — A full-length feature film-turned-documentary titled *“Fighting for Life,”* which began with the idea of highlighting the education provided at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU), has been nominated for a prestigious FREDDIE award (www.thefreddies.com). Often called the “Oscars of Health and Medicine,” the FREDDIE awards recognize those individuals who educate, involve and change the world.

Fighting for Life focuses on the role USU plays in educating leaders in military medicine and looks at the care they provide to service-men and -women injured in combat. Producer Terry Sanders set out to share the story of the “West Point of Military Medicine” in the documentary, which follows USU students on their journey to becoming uniformed physicians, and later as practicing physicians in the field. The film received national acclaim for its emotional and often times sobering view into American military medicine.

“For me, *‘Fighting for Life’* is a portrait of the compassion, skill, dedication and bravery of military doctors and nurses, along with the courage, dignity and determination of the wounded to survive and heal,” Sanders said.

Through his film, Sanders garnered visibility for a “relatively anonymous university” that teaches its students to practice good medicine in bad places. The film was originally the idea of Mrs. Tammy Alvarez, creator of the not-for-profit organization Friends of USU. Perhaps it is a familiar connection to the university that provided the motivation to see this great vision into fruition. Mrs. Alvarez’s husband, Everett Alvarez, Jr., is the former chairman of the USU Board of Regents and their son, Bryan, is an alumnus of USU’s F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine.

“I saw so much in this school,” Tammy Alvarez said. “They’re not about war. They’re about saving their fellow man. USU trains military physicians and nurses so they can put themselves in harms way to serve others.”

Located on the grounds of Bethesda’s National Naval Medical Center and across from the National Institutes of Health, USU is the nation’s federal school of medicine and graduate school of nursing. The university educates health care professionals dedicated to career service in the Department of Defense and the U.S. Public Health Service.

Fighting for Life (Page 2)

Students are active-duty uniformed officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Public Health Service, who are being educated to deal with wartime casualties, natural disasters, emerging infectious diseases, and other public health emergencies. Of the university's more than 4,200 physician alumni, the vast majority serve on active duty and are supporting operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, offering their leadership and expertise.

The documentary is scheduled to premiere on PBS over Memorial Day weekend. Check local listings for times. For more information, contact the Office of External Affairs at (301) 295-3981 or visit the USU Web site at: www.usuhs.mil.

-- End --