

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Florida Free Culture

New student group announces film screening, first meeting

Florida Free Culture, a new group at the University of Florida, will participate in the screening of a forbidden civil rights documentary on Tuesday.

Feb. 19, 2004 – Students at the University of Florida have joined the fight over copyright.

Florida Free Culture, a new group at UF, is the latest branch of a student movement for participatory culture. The national movement, launched at FreeCulture.org in 2004, is named for Stanford Law School professor Lawrence Lessig's book, "Free Culture." The movement began when two students at Swarthmore College in Swarthmore, Pa. posted on their Web site leaked memos criticizing the security of voting machine manufacturer Diebold, Inc. The company threatened the students, who responded by suing Diebold, a case they won in fall 2004.

At a Glance

"Eyes on the Prize"
film screening
Tuesday, 7 p.m.
Civic Media Center
1021 W. University Ave.

First meeting
Thursday, 7 p.m.
Reitz Union room 361
UF campus

Florida Free Culture, founded by UF students Gavin Baker and Eldo Varghese, will host its first meeting this week. Students and members of the community are invited to the meeting on Thursday, Feb. 24 at 7 p.m. in Reitz Union room 361 on the UF campus. The meeting will include a short video presentation created by group member James "J.C." Jones.

Additionally, Florida Free Culture will participate in a screening of the classic civil rights documentary, "Eyes on the Prize," this week. The 1987 film series widely is considered the best film account of the Civil Rights Movement. However, due to overwhelming copyright disputes over archival footage shown in the film, the producers of "Eyes on the Prize" have been unable to re-release or publicly perform the film. Schools and libraries are left empty-handed when their original VHS copies of the film wear out or are lost.

In recognition of Black History Month, activist group Downhill Battle created a Web site to encourage those with access to "Eyes on the Prize" to host community screenings throughout the month of February. In the first wave of screenings on Feb. 8, over 100 showings of the film took place around the world, including one organized at Swarthmore College by the Free Culture group there. Dozens more showings have taken place or been organized since then.

The Civic Media Center, an alternative press library and reading room located at 1021 W. University Ave., organized screenings of the film on Tuesday, Feb. 22 at 7 p.m. at the center. Gavin Baker of Florida Free Culture will introduce the dispute over the films' copyright. The showing is free, and the center will accept donations. The episodes shown will be "The Time Has Come," about Malcolm X and the March Against Fear, and "Two Societies," about Martin Luther King, Jr. and the riots in Detroit.

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Downhill Battle's "*Eyes on the Screen*" project
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For more information, see "Copyright laws stifle historical record," by Gavin Baker in the Feb. 9 Independent Florida Alligator, Opinions section. Online at <http://www.alligator.org/pt2/050209column.php>