

## Filmmaker Biographies

### **Roger Weisberg, Writer/Producer/Director**

Roger Weisberg joined Thirteen/WNET in 1977 as a producer of the Emmy-winning series, *HELP YOURSELF*. He produced dozens of programs on a broad range of subjects including aging, domestic violence, juvenile justice, consumer fraud, health care, the environment, child welfare, and urban poverty. Since 1980, he wrote, produced, and directed twenty-five PBS documentaries through his independent production company, Public Policy Productions. These documentaries have won over a hundred awards including Peabody, Emmy, and duPont-Columbia awards. Some of Weisberg's films are verite style documentaries with no narration. Others are narrated by prominent actors including Meryl Streep, Helen Hayes, and James Earl Jones, as well as distinguished journalists including Marvin Kalb, Jane Pauley, and Walter Cronkite. While all of Weisberg's documentaries ultimately were broadcast on national public television, his 1993 documentary, *ROAD SCHOLAR*, and his 1999 documentary, *SOUND AND FURY*, had broad theatrical releases before airing on PBS. Weisberg received an Academy Award nomination in 2001 for *SOUND AND FURY* and in 2003 for *WHY CAN'T WE BE A FAMILY AGAIN?* His current production is *WAGING A LIVING*, about the struggles of low-wage workers to lift their families out of poverty.

### **Maria Finitzo, Co-Producer/Co-Director**

Maria Finitzo has been a filmmaker for 20 years. She is an associate of the award-winning documentary company, Kartemquin Films, and is currently working on *HABITS OF THE HEART*, a feature length film which will put a human face on the promising but controversial science of stem cell research. Previously, she produced *5 GIRLS*, a feature length documentary that delved into the hearts and minds of five remarkable young women. Three years in the making, this cinema verite coming-of-age film was a special presentation of the PBS non-fiction series *P.O.V* and premiered on national public television in the fall of 2001. Lauded by the New York Times as "*a remarkable testament to the resiliency of youth*" and by the Santa Fe Reporter as "*one of the most powerful examinations of teenage life ever created,*" *5 Girls* was awarded the Henry Hampton Award for Excellence from The Council on Foundations, the Silver Award from The Chicago Film & Television Competition and the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Parent's Guide to Children's Media.