

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FESTIVAL INFO**

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## **Actor James Karen to open Waterfront Film Festival**

SAUGATUCK, MICHIGAN – Renowned actor James Karen will open the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Waterfront Film Festival Thursday evening, June 10, in Saugatuck.

Karen – one of Hollywood’s longest-working actors – has appeared in hundreds of films and TV shows, including *Mulholland Drive*, *Wall Street*, *Poltergeist*, *Seinfeld*, and *The Practice*, to name only a few of his screen credits. Karen will open the film festival and introduce its first screening.

Additionally, Karen will present the June 11, 9 a.m. Waterfront Film Festival screening of *Flickering Blue*, a Grand Valley State University film in which he stars. The feature documentary, *This Is My Father*, directed by Waterfront Film Festival alumnus John Putch, will screen immediately after *Flickering Blue*. Karen will be available to answer questions after the screening.

Karen spent several weeks in Michigan last summer working on the film directed by GVSU film professor Harper Philbin and his all-student crew. “I had three of the best weeks of my life working on that film. The script knocked me out,” Karen said. “The film is quite meaningful in what it has to say.”

Filmed in Grand Rapids and Lansing, *Flickering Blue* tells the story of Al, a lonely old man who has outlived all of his friends and family. Afraid of dying alone in his dingy apartment, he takes a rare stroll through the city in an attempt to reconnect with people.

Said Philbin: “I was inspired by the idea of a man out of time from a different era, born in 1924, bewildered by the world in 2004 – the last of a dying breed who thinks it’s all over for him but experiences a little rebirth even at his advanced age.”

Working in Michigan was a homecoming of sorts for Karen. One of his first acting jobs was at the Grand Hotel on Mackinaw Island. “I love Michigan,” Karen said. He and his wife, Alba Francesca, are currently staying in West Michigan while Karen participates in Waterfront and his wife, a director and producer, directs GVSU’s upcoming student film.

The film festival’s kick-off evening on Water Street features a free screening of the silent film classic, Clara Bow’s *It*, accompanied by live music from Kalamazoo’s premier modern music quartet, Blue Dahlia. A street party and adjacent beer-and-wine garden starts at 7 p.m. At 9:30 p.m., Karen officially opens the festival. Trailers of selected festival films will be shown, and then, at 10 p.m., the screening of *It* begins.

Entertainment professionals from Los Angeles, New York, and Michigan created the Waterfront Film Festival in 1999 to provide a “middle coast” venue for independent filmmakers eager to show their work to sophisticated audiences. Call 269-857-8351 for festival information or visit [www.waterfrontfilm.org](http://www.waterfrontfilm.org).

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**FESTIVAL FOUNDERS**

Dana DePree • Dori DePree • Hopwood DePree • Kori Eldean • Judy Smith