

## Film News: 'Manlife: The Last of Lawsonians' Wins Audience Award at 2017 Chicago Underground Film Festival

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 9, 2017 - 9:26am

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CHICAGO – The 24th Chicago Underground Film Festival (CUFF) wrapped on June 4th, 2017, and announced their award winners on June 7th. Taking the Audience Award, the top prize at CUFF, was the closing night film “Manchild: The Last of the Lawsonians.” As a bonus, the 96 year-old star of the film, Merle Lawson, got the opportunity to bask in the limelight, as he appeared on behalf of the film.

The documentary – directed by Ryan Sarnowski – focuses on Merle Hayden, age 90-something, the last member of the utopian movement Lawsonomy, which seeks to preserve the legacy of its Commander, Alfred Lawson. Lawson invented the United States' first passenger airliner, but his company went bankrupt during the Great Depression. Dismayed by the economic policies at work, Lawson created the Direct Credits Society, a movement against what Lawson called “the one percent” (sound familiar?) The Society advocated for economic reform and “justice for everyone that harms no one.” Once the Depression ended, and the country went back to work, the movement faded. But there was one disciple left... Merle Hayden. The documentary tells the story of his loyalty to the cause, a relationship from the past and a life that still needs redemption.



The CUFF Audience Award Winner: 'Manlife: The Last of the Lawsonians'

*Photo credit: CUFF.org*

The Chicago Underground Film Festival is an annual event showcasing independent, experimental and documentary films from around the world. Their mission is to promote films and videos that dissent radically in form, technique, or content from the “indie” mainstream, and to present adventurous works that challenge and transcend commercial and audience expectations. The screenings are comprised of narrative,

documentary and experimental features, shorts, and music videos, representing more than 20 countries, make up the main body of the festival, along with nightly parties and live music, discussions and other networking and community building events.

The complete list of the 2017 CUFF Award recipients are as follows...

**AUDIENCE AWARD:** “Manchild: The Last of the Lawsonians” Directed by Ryan Sarnowski

**MADE-IN-CHICAGO AWARD:** “How to Have Your/Own Television Show/(You Already Do)” Directed by Jesse Malm

**JURY AWARD:** “INNAATE/SE” Directed by Adam Khalil and Zack Khahil

**JURY AWARD:** “As Without So Within” Directed by Manuela de Laborde

**JURY AWARD:** “The Pink Egg” Directed by Jim Trainor

**JURY AWARD:** “Indefinite Pitch” Directed by James N. Kienitz Wilkins

**JURY AWARD:** “Steven Go Get Me a Switch” Directed by Jared Buckhiester

**JURY AWARD:** “See a Dog, Hear a Dog” Directed by Jesse McLean

**HONORABLE MENTION:** “Ark” Directed by Lynne Siefert

**HONORABLE MENTION:** “See With No Name” by Emi Linnakoski

**HONORABLE MENTION:** “Luna E Santur” Directed by Joshua Gen Solondz

*For more information regarding the 24th Chicago Underground Film Festival (CUFF), [click here](#). [18] The sponsoring organization of CUFF is IFP Chicago, a non-profit dedicated to the voice of independent film. For more information about IFP Chicago, [click here](#). [19]*



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