



NEWS RELEASE

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Bona Basketball Documentary Slated for 2025 PBS Airing Receives \$100,000 Grant from William E. and Ann L. Swan Foundation

OLEAN, N.Y. – The upcoming video documentary on St. Bonaventure University men’s basketball set against the fabric of America’s civil rights and political struggles, **Brown and White: The Heart of Bona’s Basketball**, has received a \$100,000 funding grant from the William E. and Ann L. Swan Foundation.

The documentary tells the extraordinary story of how one of the smallest NCAA Division I college basketball programs in America, nestled in the remote hills of southwestern New York State, fought the odds to play on a national stage while also providing a rare insight into how one school confronted the changing racial, social and economic norms of the past 70 years.

Currently in late post-production, **Brown and White: The Heart of Bona’s Basketball** has a commitment to be aired in 2025 on WNET PBS Buffalo-Toronto with 3.1 million viewers and the potential to be distributed to 350 PBS stations across the country.

“We are extremely grateful to the William E. and Ann L. Swan Foundation for its generous support of our filmmaking effort to tell the nation how the St. Bonaventure men’s basketball program became such a success and served as a microcosm for what was happening daily in America, especially during the 1960s and 1970s,” said Mike Camoin, a 1988 St. Bonaventure graduate and award-winning filmmaker who is the documentary producer and director through Videos for Change Productions.

“Bill and Ann Swan were ardent supports of Bona Basketball and, through this special gift, are still giving back today,” he said. “The Swans are one of the many stories at the heart of Bona’s basketball.”

Bill Swan was a former Brown Indian mascot and chairman of the SBU Board of Trustees who tragically passed away after successfully guiding the university through the aftermath of the player compliance scandal in 2003.

“Long before she received an honorary degree from St. Bonaventure, my sister Ann, was a public school kid from Buffalo who adopted her husband Bill’s Franciscan heart. Ann and Bill were truly devoted to each other,” said Pauline Kalenik from the Swan Foundation. “Anything Ann could do to shine a spotlight on Bill’s eternal passion for St. Bonaventure, she would.”

“After hearing about *Brown and White: The Heart of Bona’s Basketball*, I said to myself, ‘Ann would do this in a heartbeat,’” she said. “She would fully support this movie knowing it embodies the Franciscan values Bill carried everywhere in his pocket. Wherever it plays, *Brown 'n White* will remind others of their Franciscan Spirit for eternity. It was an easy and immediate decision.”

This groundbreaking documentary examines the impact of this iconic men’s basketball program over several decades by highlighting, based on more than 70 interviews, the untold and forgotten stories and contributions by players and coaches to St. Bonaventure University, to the game itself and to society.

Playing a major role in St. Bonaventure University’s unique journey is the influence of its founding Franciscan friars and the values espoused by St. Francis of Assisi – that of creating a community that affirms the unique worth of each person, service to the poor and marginalized and reverence for all creation.

“It was into this welcoming environment that two orphaned African-American teens ventured from Harlem to blaze the trail to the St. Bonaventure campus,” Camoin said, “thus laying the cornerstone for the Bonnies program to advance to its first NCAA tournament in the Deep Jim Crow South and for many other successes to follow.”

The ensuing years saw the team mount an extraordinary 22-0 regular season record, reach the NCAA Final Four as the smallest Division I school ever, win the NIT Championship, push Kentucky to double OT in the NCAA tournament, fall into a player compliance scandal, and ultimately rebound back into national relevance with five more NCAA and NIT tournament appearances this century, including a March Madness victory over UCLA.

More information is available on **Brown and White: The Heart of Bona’s Basketball** at brownwhitestory.com