

'American Denial' Featured at WKAR Community Cinema and Project 60/50

A provocative look at race in America through the prism of a landmark 1944 inquiry into Jim Crow segregation

Free Screening and Conversation at WKAR Thursday, February 19, 7 p.m.

EAST LANSING, MI; FEBRUARY 3, 2015 -- WKAR Community Cinema returns in February with a screening and conversation featuring **American Denial**, a new documentary that sheds a unique light on the unconscious political and moral world of modern Americans. Highlighting social research from the 1940s, the film weaves a narrative exposing some of the potential underlying causes continuing to affect implicit racial biases inherent in America's institutions today.

The WKAR Community Cinema event takes place **Thursday, Feb. 19 at 7 p.m.** at WKAR in the Communication Arts and Sciences building on the Michigan State campus. The event is free, but online reservations are required at WKAR.org.

The evening begins with a screening of an excerpt from the film and continues with conversation addressing the issues as they play out in Michigan, with panelists **Pero Dagbovie**, professor of history specializing in African American and African studies at Michigan State; and **Eva Lois Evans**, education leader and 2005 inductee into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame.

This screening and conversation is a free presentation in partnership with **Project 60/50** at Michigan State University.

More About 'American Denial'

American Denial sheds a unique light on the unconscious political and moral world of modern Americans. By highlighting the social research unearthed by a Swede's research in the 1940s, the film weaves a narrative (using research footage, newsreels, home movies, and modern short films) exposing some of the potential underlying causes continuing to affect implicit racial biases inherent in America's institutions today. Timely given recent events that have sparked a national dialogue on race dynamics, the provocative film's exploration of "stop and frisk" practices, the incarceration crisis, and racially-patterned poverty challenges our assumptions about who we are and what we really believe.



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In 1938, the Carnegie Corporation commissioned Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal to begin a landmark study of race and inequality in the United States. His question: How could a people who cherish freedom and fairness also create such a racially oppressive society? Published in 1944, “An American Dilemma” was cited in the Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to desegregate America’s schools. 70 years later, with many of us looking for answers as to why race is still such a dividing wedge in society, Myrdal’s question continues to challenge America — how do we explain the disconnect between what we believe and what we practice in what some have called a “post-racial” America? *American Denial* juxtaposes past and present, shifting from Myrdal’s investigation — and his own personal struggle with denial — and current stories of racial injustice that are often overlooked in our national insistence on the preeminence of the ideals of liberty, justice, and equality. *American Denial* is directed by Llewellyn Smith and produced by Christine Herbes-Sommers, Smith, and Kelly Thomson.

On the Air

American Denial airs on Monday, February 26, 2015 at 10 p.m. (check local listings) on WKAR and PBS.

About Project 60/50

Michigan State University facilitates a year-long community conversation on civil and human rights. Learn more at inclusion.msu.edu

Community Cinema is a groundbreaking public education and civic engagement initiative featuring screenings of films from Independent Lens on location in 100 cities and online. Between September and June, Community Cinema brings together leading organizations, community members and public television stations to learn, discuss and get involved in today’s critical social issues.

The **WKAR Network** is part of Michigan State University’s College of Communication Arts and Sciences. The WKAR Network provides mid-Michigan and the global community with award-winning original programming and the best from PBS and NPR via television channels WKAR-HD, WKAR World and WKAR Create; and radio broadcasts at 90.5 FM, AM 870 and WKAR Radio Reading Service. At WKAR.org and video.wkar.org, the network offers live audio streaming, plus local news features, TV original full episodes and the best from NPR and PBS on-demand. The WKAR Network provides additional community outreach with WKAR Ready to Learn Service and PBS LearningMedia.

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