

# THE WILLIAM F. WHITE / VILMOS ZSIGMOND CINEMATOGRAPHY SCHOLARSHIP



The William F. White / Vilmos Zsigmond Cinematography Scholarship offers a **\$3,000.00** cash scholarship to be awarded to a student currently enrolled in an accredited post-secondary or graduate studies program, toward a diploma or degree, in any of the following programs of study: Film, Digital Media, Television, and Cinematography Arts.



## VILMOS ZSIGMOND, ASC

Famed cinematographer and Oscar-winner, Vilmos Zsigmond passed away on January 1, 2016 at the age of 85. A long-time business partner of William F. White International Inc. (WFW), Zsigmond was one of the founders and owners of **Sparks Camera & Lighting Ltd.**, a leading Budapest, Hungary-based provider of top-quality professional production equipment. Sparks was originally co-founded through WFW as a joint business venture with Zsigmond and has been servicing eastern and western European content creators since 1991. Our partnership and friendship with Vilmos inspired the creation of this scholarship, which helps us give back to the community in his honour.

*“Vilmos was one of the kindest, most accomplished and inspirational cinematographers of his time,”* said Comweb/WFW Co-Chairman & Senior Advisor, Paul Bronfman. *“He was also a terrific business partner who helped WFW gain respect throughout Europe and beyond. We feel honoured and privileged to have been his partners.”*

WFW is committed to finding, supporting and forging relationships with the next generation of cinematographers. Since its inception in 2016, the William F. White / Vilmos Zsigmond Cinematography Scholarship has been awarded to four fantastic recipients who have all invested in their own futures by committing to study: **Adam Madrzyk** (2016-Ryerson University), **Everett Sokol** (2017-Red Deer College), **Michael Kashuba** (2018-Humber College), **Sam Kilpatrick** (2019-Humber College) and **Philip Lemoyne** (2020-Humber College). These talented cinematographers have had an opportunity to build unique, personal partnerships with the WFW family. Whether it be through time spent our facilities across Canada, access to our world-class equipment inventory, mentorship, or introductions to recognized industry professionals, it has been our honour to support their endeavours.

*“Most importantly for me anyway, it’s not about the money but being able to meet industry heads in Canada who are working and have been in the industry for a long time.”* (Michael Kashuba, TIFF 2018 <https://youtu.be/wLFqEFcDUdY>)

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## ABOUT VILMOS ZSIGMOND

Zsigmond was born in Szeged, Hungary, the son of Bozena (née Illichman), an administrator, and Vilmos Zsigmond, a celebrated soccer player and coach. He studied cinema at the Academy of Drama and Film in Budapest. He received an MA in cinematography. He worked for five years in a Budapest feature film studio becoming “director of photography.” Together with his friend and fellow student László Kovács, he chronicled the events of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution in Budapest on thirty thousand feet of film and then escaped to Austria shortly afterwards. This early chapter of his professional life, with some of their footage of the revolution, constitutes the opening segment of the bio-documentary by PBS’s Independent Lens (2009) called *No Subtitles Necessary: Laszlo & Vilmos*.



In 1962, he became a naturalized citizen of the United States. He settled in Los Angeles and worked in photo labs as a technician and photographer. During the 1960s, he worked on many low-budget independent films and educational films, as he attempted to break into the film industry. Some of the films that he worked on during this period credited him as “William Zsigmond,” including the classic horror B-Film, *The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies*. The first film he worked on in the United States was *The Sadist*, starring Arch Hall, Jr. In 1964 working with a favorite crew which included László Kovács, Jim Enochs, and Ernie Reed, Vilmos shot the European style, neo-noir, black and white film *Summer Children* (aka *A Hot Summer Game*) which has recently been fully restored digitally for DVD release.

He gained prominence during the 1970s after being hired by Robert Altman as cinematographer for *McCabe & Mrs. Miller*. Subsequent major films he shot include Altman’s *The Long Goodbye*, John Boorman’s *Deliverance* and Steven Spielberg’s *The Sugarland Express* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, the latter of which won him the Academy Award for Best Cinematography. Zsigmond worked with Brian De Palma on *Obsession*, *Blow Out*, *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, and *The Black Dahlia*, with Michael Cimino on *The Deer Hunter* and *Heaven’s Gate*, with Richard Donner on *Maverick* and *Assassins*, with Kevin Smith on *Jersey Girl*, with George Miller on *The Witches Of Eastwick*, with Mark Rydell on *Cinderella Liberty*, *The Rose*, *The River*, and *Intersection*, and with Woody Allen on *Melinda and Melinda*, *Cassandra’s Dream*, and *You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger*.

He was a longtime user and endorser of Tiffen filters, and is also associated with the technique known as ‘flashing’ or ‘pre-fogging’. This involves carefully exposing the film negative to a small, controlled amount of light in order to create a muted colour palette, pioneered by cinematographer Freddie Young on the 1966 film *The Deadly Affair*.

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In 2012, Zsigmond along with Yuri Neyman, ASC co-founded Global Cinematography Institute in Los Angeles, CA with the mission to educate cinematographers, and to preserve and extend the role of the cinematographer as the major expert and contributor in the image building process in all current and future variations of the complex mix of artistry and technology.

In 2003, a survey conducted by the International Cinematographers Guild placed Zsigmond among the ten most influential cinematographers in history.

Vilmos Zsigmond passed away in Big Sur, California on January 1, 2016.

