Gail Thomas - A few speechwriting samples

1. Martin Scorsese Opening Remarks - The First TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL

It has been an amazing inaugural year. The Tribeca Film Festival was an idea conceived by Robert De Niro and Jane Rosenthal over 13 years ago. Following the events of September 11th, the need for this event became urgent. The Festival has drawn talent from all over the globe to Lower Manhattan, bringing business back here and reminding the world that New York remains an international hub for independent film.

Like New York, independent film gives an artist the opportunity to explore new ideas, to take risks. Visionaries have always come from independent film – providing a valuable service as their work expands our consciousness and awakens our souls. New York, a city famous for its diversity, has always challenged and inspired filmmakers to awaken the unconscious common memories shared by people all over the world.

We gather tonight for the First Award Ceremony for First Annual Tribeca Film Festival. This year, more than 1300 films from around the world were submitted for consideration. The Festival's final slate included 62 feature, documentary, and shorts to be considered for the program, Films in Competition. It's time to honor the winners.

This is our first Awards Show for the Tribeca Film Festival, so we're learning. But we knew that we needed awards, like a trophy or statute or something: a winged lady holding a globe outstretched, a pointed obelisk, a naked guy with a wreath around his head. These were all taken.

So we looked around the neighborhood and found a few internationally renowned, Tribeca-based artists and we asked them to come up with something. The awards you see tonight and, in the years to come, will be designed by these and other amazing artists.

Laurie Simmons designed the award for the Best Short Film. Her use of media as subject evokes new dialogue in contemporary art, as seen in her scenes staged for the camera using dolls, ventriloquist dummies, mannequins and even people.

Stephan Hannock designed the award for the Emerging Filmmaker. Stephan is internationally known for his luminous and atmospheric landscape paintings, as well as painting many of the Academy Award winning visual effects in the film, *What Dreams May Come True.*

Bryan Hunt designed the award for the Best Narrative Feature Film. Hunt's initial training as an architect and an engineer's assistant at NASA influenced his work which includes scale-model works of the Great Wall of China and the Empire State Building.

You see, we weren't even satisfied with the same design for all the awards. After all, this is New York.

2. Fred Willard Emcee Opening - Big Brothers Big Sisters Los Angeles GALA

Hello busy people of Los Angeles and the Inland Empire. Thanks for coming. We have a diverse crowd tonight with a variety of life styles, dietary restrictions and receding hairlines. Yet we are all for the same reason: we share a great love and concern for needy children. We know how precious this time is for development of a human being. Your childhood brought you here today… obviously someone did something right.

Tonight, we celebrate the disadvantaged kids who somehow found their way to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles. I'm especially grateful to be your host because I learned through my wife Mary what a long lasting effect one-on-one mentorship can have on the life of an underprivileged child.

Not everyone can spare the time it takes to become a big brother or big sister, but any amount of volunteering or contribution will help bring love where it is so greatly needed. Later this evening, you'll witness first hand the results of that love.

My background is improvisation, built upon the premise that one must listen and react, following the "yes and" rule to move story forward. Tonight we encourage you to help move a child's life forward. Please don't be afraid to say "yes and." Your actions are guaranteed to make the world a better place.

Tonight we will show you how a new best friend can change a child's life forever. It starts as a very carefully arranged meeting between strangers: a grownup and a child… After a few baseball games, movies or simple conversations, an underprivileged child is exposed to a brighter future and new possibilities. This is the work of a Big Brother or Sister. You are our extended family. But don't worry, I promise not to show up unannounced for Thanksgiving dinner. Here's a little family video.

3. Sherry Lansing Acceptance Speech - Award from Big Brothers Big Sisters Los Angeles

Thank you. Well, it feels a little strange to be standing up here receiving an honor from an organization that has already given me so much. It's truly been an honor to be involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles. The rewards are almost indescribable – but, let me try.

It all started thirty years ago, when someone took me to a small Christmas party downtown, for this tiny organization called Big Sisters. I was invited there as I was to so many events. But this was different. I immediately felt something extraordinary and simple. Love, one on one. The faces of those kids, the connections between the big sisters and little sisters were so inspiring.

I was busy running Fox at the time, making movies. It's a complicated job. But suddenly I was given the opportunity to slow down and watch the power of the relationships that begin with Big Brothers Big Sisters. That night, when I felt the selflessness and caring between everyone in that room, I knew had to get involved.

So here I am, many events later. I still get goose bumps whenever I see a big grin spread across the face of a young boy or girl who got a second chance.

Some of these children have such incredible obstacles to overcome. But they do it. The mentorship program is a precious, life-changing gift. Thanks to people in this room, families are actually breaking cycles of lives that started with an uncertain or even grim future. It's simply love one on one human connection.

Thanks so much for this honor. This organization reminds me year after year after year about the simple power of love. That's already been your gift to me. The life changing power of an open heart. And I feel it here tonight. One person can light the way for another. And this organization has changed me. Forever. Thank you.

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