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**Media Contact:** Laura Turner  
Director of Communications  
800.354.9338, ext. 2240  
lturner@wedu.org

## ***WEDU HEROES FROM THE BAY PROJECT REACHED MILLIONS*** ***PBS Station's World War II Story Collection Effort a Monumental Success***

**Tampa, FL** - A familiar date to most Americans, December 7<sup>th</sup> brings forth memories of tragedy juxtaposed with feelings of astonishment. The United States had just suffered an unmerciful surprise attack by Japan. The "day that will live in infamy" has certainly continued to do so as 66 years later Americans remember what catapulted the country into the Second World War on Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

This war that seemingly affected all Americans was masterfully documented in Ken Burns' *The War*: a 14-hour epic that told the story of World War II through the personal accounts of nearly 50 men and women from four American towns. The seven-part series, which premiered on WEDU in September, was the most watched PBS series in the last 10 years. Exploring the most intimate human dimensions of the greatest cataclysm in history – a worldwide catastrophe that touched the lives of every family on every street in every town in America – *The War* demonstrated that in extraordinary times, there are no ordinary lives. The film honored and celebrated the bravery, endurance, and sacrifice of the generation of Americans who lived through what will always be known simply as The War.

In concert with the premiere of this epic masterpiece, WEDU, west central Florida's primary PBS station, launched a comprehensive story collection effort entitled *Heroes from the Bay* which commenced on Memorial Day 2007. This multi-platform initiative solicited stories from those touched by World War II – whether they be a veteran, a spouse, a family member, or a friend – WEDU wanted to document stories of those who made up the "greatest generation." Through Veterans Day 2007, millions of west central Floridians participated in the WEDU *Heroes from the Bay* project. The community could view video testimonials both on-line on wedu.org and on-air; read submitted stories on-line or via *Premiere* magazine, WEDU's donor publication, as well as scroll through various local World War II facts on the station's Web site dedicated to this effort. All World War II accounts collected through the WEDU *Heroes from the Bay* project have been collected and submitted to the Library of Congress' *Veterans History Project* – an initiative introduced by the United States Congress to collect the stories and experiences of U.S. war veterans to honor them and document their contributions. Additionally, WEDU has submitted these stories to the state capitol in Tallahassee for the Florida's collection efforts.

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For more information about WEDU programming, special events, outreach efforts and community partnerships, please visit [wedu.org](http://wedu.org) or call 800.354.9338. WEDU, a 501(c)(3) organization, is West Central Florida's primary PBS station serving 16 counties including the Tampa, St. Petersburg, Pasco, Polk and Sarasota areas through multiple media disciplines including on-air broadcasting and online experiences. WEDU, recently awarded its second consecutive four-star rating by Charity Navigator, is financially supported by its local community, and provides the highest quality education, information, and entertainment programming on local, national, and international levels.

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***Please find below a sample of some of the participants in the WEDU Heroes from the Bay project:***

Braulio Alonso of Tampa

Laszlo Apathy of Engelwood

Allen Benz of Largo

Rolf David Boe of Sun City Center

John Bohne of Sun City Center

Martha Cameron of Tampa

Eugene Cianflone of Spring Hill

Moses Darby of Tampa

John Stuart of Davis

Stanley Davis of Tampa

Margaret Gaydos of Tampa

Carl Genk of Tampa

John Germany of Tampa

Sam Gibbons of Tampa

Marion Gray of Tampa

Robert "Bob" Gray of Tampa

Robert Hurd of St. Petersburg

Jim Hussman of Venice

Charles Johnson of Lutz

Evelyn Johnson of Tampa

Terry Lyle of Tampa

Ray Metzger of Brooksville

D. Montroes Graem of Sarasota

Elias Nader of Tampa

Joseph Nimo of Tampa

Mark Orr of Tampa

Joseph Pagac of Seminole

Harry Parham of Tampa

Adrian Pendarvis of Fairfield

D. Roth of Sarasota

James Salerno of Tampa

Bennie Shuman of Tampa

Frances Stavros of St. Petersburg

Gus Stavros of St. Petersburg

Ralph Styles of Sarasota

Denio Vila of Land O'Lakes

Hector Vila of Tampa

Joe Vila of Tampa

Robert Vila of Tampa

Wilfred Vila of Plant City

Willie Vila of Tampa

Carl Wilson of Tampa

Edwin Wolski of Web Site

Basil Woolf of Dunedin

Orrin Wright of Bartow

Nasby Wynn of Sarasota