

# Zerf Newsletter

## Summer 2007

[www.zerfchallenge2020.com](http://www.zerfchallenge2020.com)

### DREAM ON AND ACHIEVE



#### **INTERNATIONAL AWARDS**

Golden Horse -  
Burkina Faso Community 1987  
New Hope Center -  
South Africa 1997  
South African Women of Women -  
Toronto 1998  
Ville de Montreal Keys 2001  
The Queen's Jubilee Medal 2002  
Government of South Africa 2005  
Peace Medal - , 2006  
YMCA of Greater Montreal 2006  
SAS Galleries 2007

#### **REFLECTIONS**

I sometimes wonder what my accomplishments are worth and whether they are of any relevance to what I am doing today, and for the future. But then I reflect on my life story and feel extraordinary self-worth, which I achieve by giving of myself to others. For me, achievement is all about sticking to my commitments and persevering against all odds. The satisfaction and thrill of a job well done gives me the appetite for more. Achievement breeds

achievement. Once one has mastered something, it becomes less difficult to master other things. Achievement comes from stretching whatever ability one possesses to its limits. At a certain point in my life, personal and social progress became the same. Working with the community at home and for the children in Africa and for the good of everyone else is what allows me to feel that my career has been a distinguished one, particularly when I reminisce on the simplicity of my childhood dream – to understand how the film gets into the camera. 'Dream on!' was the sarcastic response from the people around me.

Education for girls was neither encouraged nor an option in the South Africa of my upbringing. Stigmatized by the label 'colored,' I was excluded from receiving an education or from obtaining skills, and having a chance in life. Still, I persevered.

Economic need led me to work in a stocking factory when I was 15. At the age of 17, a bus trip through South Africa and north to Kenya presented itself and I hungrily seized the opportunity for this journey. Embarking on a walking safari in Kenya, I met Dr. Edwin Fowler, a Canadian sociology professor who, after five days, fell sick with malaria and needed to be cared for. I gave up the rest of the safari and took care of him in a tent. A day before my departure from camp he offered me, as a gesture of gratitude, the opportunity to complete my high school in Canada. I could not have hoped for something better and accepted this welcome challenge four years later, without fear.

Learning about Canada and its people, especially the Metis, fascinated me because of the similarities with South African 'colored people.' For the first time I learned I too was one.

It is a common mistake to confuse talent with achievement. Ability is like raw cotton. You might use it to make a dress. Actually making a dress is an accomplishment. For the disabled person it might be as much of an achievement to tie a shoelace as for a musical genius to write a symphony.

In the first movie I directed, when the cranes lifted me up to the blue skies and I uttered, 'Action!' to 200 extras, my dream was realized. I believed I could fly! An awesome experience! This movie entitled *Python Wolf*, produced and directed by Hollywood director, William Friedkin, won an Academy Award. Years later, another magic moment on the silver screen presented itself. I participated with other actors in the movie, *l'Ange de Goudron* (TheTarAngel) by Denis Chouinard of Montreal, the story of a family of Algerian immigrants.. The film reflected the reality of immigrant life in Montreal and as an immigrant myself, I identified strongly with the challenges.

In South Africa, apartheid law is no longer in the books, but Aparthness is still in p  
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my education, I have  
et with the European  
ESCO in Paris, the  
Human Resources Secretariat in London,  
England, and government officials  
throughout Canada, and in Kenya, the  
Americas, South Africa and Tanzania.

When the HIV/AIDS epidemic began to sweep through Africa, I began the

work of raising awareness, funds, and medicine for the infected and affected children in the Congo, Kenya South Africa and Tanzania, where the populations are ravaged by drought, starvation and disease. As well, I collect food on a weekly basis, along with clothes and education material for the needy here at home and Canada-wide. The hearing-impaired children at the New Hope Center in Worcester, South Africa have been delighted by the donations of books, computer and hearing aids.

It is our hope to establish a Zerf Diagnostic and Training Center in Tanzania. We can save the lives of many children living with HIV/AIDS in Africa by supplying them with medicine, food and love



At a certain point in my life, an ongoing daily engagement in the community became a personal commitment. I have enjoyed a career more exciting than I could ever have imagined. While helping others in need, I can only hope that my three children, Pierre, Nadia and Vanya, and grandchildren Skylar and Lorna, will continue to gain satisfaction from their own passions and achievements.

Logos are a part of our daily lives. They have been displayed for thousands of years. Countries and corporations display them as a form of identification – like Canada's maple leaf, or our Zerf logo depicting a female horse. I was in Europe in 1985 doing research for Zerf

Production's first slide project entitled, *The Zerfred Grapevine*. It was then I came upon the explanation of the significance of the motto 'Zerf' – that it represents strength, courage and perseverance.

Logos have been important symbols of power and territorial possession throughout history. Logos were carried into battle and the capture of an enemy's standard meant a military and moral victory. The conquest of Gaul by the Romans meant the loss of land to the conquering power. Upon their retreat, the land could be reclaimed by displaying a family crest or logo.

My paternal Jewish ancestors faced similar circumstances in France during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Jews were not allowed to own land. To maintain their claim to the land, my ancestors were forced into subterfuge through the act of displaying the image of a deer (or Zerff, an archaic form of 'Cerf,' the French word for 'deer') on their front door, proclaiming themselves to be Christians. Thus, as people of the deer, they became known as 'de la Zerff' and once more became proud owners of their land. My ancestors defied the risks involved by their strength, courage, and perseverance in order to achieve success. It is by these underlying qualities that the logo of Zerf Productions represents Wilhelmina Fredericks.

**Rev. Canon Dr. Jan Dikjman  
President of Zerf Productions**



After serving in the Anglican Church in the diocese of Johannesburg for 24 years, my bishop at the time, the Rt. Rev. Desmond Tutu, gave me permission to seek an appointment outside of South Africa. I didn't want to see my sons shooting our Black friends under the system of enforced conscription into the army.

Thus it was that I arrived with my wife and our three sons in Montreal in February 1987 in what seemed like a Baptism of Snow and Ice! I was appointed vicar of Christ church cathedral to take care of the spiritual needs of the congregation while major construction was underway to house the 'Promenade de la Cathedral' underneath the Cathedral building. At that time I was styled, 'The priest from the church on stilts between Eaton's and the Bay!'

As an immigrant to Quebec, it was natural to seek out people from the land of my birth, as well as making new friends. Hence I was interested in the religious services, which were organized at the home of the South African Consul in Montreal. That is where I first met Wilhelmina Fredericks, Mr. Jan Beckman, and other friends of South Africa who eventually formed the first board of Zerf Productions.

The momentous political changes in South Africa over the next decade led to many opportunities to be involved with other ministers in downtown Montreal, in arranging religious services to mark the stages of those changes. When, in 1995, I became Rector of the Church of St. James the Apostle, that became the venue for services of the South African church community. Wilhelmina and members of Zerf were very much

involved and reminded us of the needs and suffering of the poor in Africa. We were all deeply challenged to use our talents and contacts to provide practical help to at least some of those in need. Zerf Productions, which links artistic talent to serving those in need, provided us with an excellent means of doing something practical.

### ***Crystal Hooper joins us***

I met Wilhelmina a few years back. My choir sang during a send-off concert before she, her daughter Nadia, and a team left to go and deliver medicine to the clinics in Tanzania and then climb Kilimanjaro. I was fortunate to see the post-climb video at a gathering of United Church women. This is the real stuff.

This year I decided to participate in the '2020 challenge' and contribute by doing the things I love to do, writing, networking, spinning music, singing and dancing, to name a few.

Wilhelmina calls me her media girl. I was hosting an African music show on radio early this year and I invited her to come and speak about the project. Next, I thought, the listeners should hear a first-hand account from a climber, so Nadia came on and recounted her exhilarating experience of reaching the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro! Next, Pastor Dijkman came on to tell us his story as a South African who was fortunate to escape the heinous apartheid regime and who became a key figure for the South African worship community in Montreal. Using community radio to reach out to the community. We must big up Bassa, the head man on the show, for giving the 2020 'challengers' carteblanche access to the airwaves on

CKUT, Radio McGill, 90.3FM, Tuesday mornings, between 9 and 11. Do tune in. He has also invited people to **drop off their donations** at the station, **3647 University, corner Pine**. (starting with their dollar store loonies)

The two fund-raising events for 2007 were the *thoi thoi* and the *khoi khoi*. The first event featured a fashion show (I modeled) of men and women wearing traditional Massai regalia dancing the *thoi thoi*, and later donning formal and informal African designs. A Spectacular feast for the eyes! The *khoi khoi* was a concert which showcased several wonderful performances of soloists, duos, trios and a choir. A small but appreciative crowd contributed to this enjoyable evening, and we collected food and raised money for medicine.

On September 16, 2007 we gathered at St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church in N.D.G. for a blessing of the climbers et al, who depart Montreal for Tanzania on September 22, 2007. And we were, in fact, all blessed by the divine voices of Vivienne Deane and her trio. Following the service was a generous reception and fellowship.

I am descended from Africans enslaved in the United States, and although I don't do politics, I've always been sensitive to the plight of the disadvantaged of the world. I'm happy I can contribute my gifts and talents to this project. For the last 5 years I've been wanting to go to Africa but I always said I would have to know *why* I was going, that there would be some higher purpose than just a vacation. When I shared this with Wilhelmina a few months ago and she responded, '*Crystal, you will go to Africa,*' I was overcome with emotion.

My daughter and I are planning to take up the challenge next year and go on

safari through the rainforest at the base of Kilimanjaro (one can do this if you don't feel you can manage the climb). I would also like to spend time with the children in the clinics. God willing.

There are a million and one tasks, both large and small, that go into sustaining the vision of 20 million dollars for 20 million children. Search your hearts and see how you can contribute.

- Fund-raising in your own communities, amongst your co-workers, neighbors, clubs and groups, congregations is an invaluable support. Everyone gives a dollar – it keeps growing. And you can give more if you want!
- Call us to come and speak to your audience about the project.
- There are sometimes clerical tasks.
- We need the services once or twice a week of someone with a car for quick errands in NDG.

We want to compile a bank of resource people. Again, lots of people each donating a bit of energy – it adds up. Thank you, and God bless.

### ***Untimely Death of Jan Francis Beckman***



We sadly announce the sudden death of Jan Francis Beckman. He died at the Lakeshore General Hospital in April 2007.

He joined Zerf Productions in 1989 and served as Vice President, Accountant, Treasurer and Friend. As one of our accountants, he was a special mentor to our young and middle level colleagues. He supported them in research and teaching, and supervising those placed under his responsibility.

He was a model of ethics in terms of commitment to duty and accountability of resources. He knew every official in government and related well to all. He would have celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on July 1st. We cannot forget him. Please join us in praying for his family as they go through this period of grief.

A memorial church service was held for Jan in Beaconsfield, and he was buried in the Military Garden of Remembrance in Pointe Claire. The board members in attendance were Dr. Jan Dijkman, John and Cathy Fetherstonhaugh, Ilse Sullivan, Nadia van Leeuwen, Chris Blais and Wilhelmina Fredericks.

A good soldier was he. He will be remembered for his 20 years of contribution to Zerf Productions and for his sense of humour. Rest in peace, Jan.

Obituaries.

The Rev Canon Jan Hendrik L Dijkman  
B.A., B.D., M., Ph.D

December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1937- January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Born in Johannesburg South Africa December 4, 1937, Canon Dijkman was ordained priest in 1963. He was the president of Zerf Productions for 10 years. He will be sadly missed by the

Community of Notre Dame de Grace,  
Canada