

# CITY NEWS

## # EQUALITY FOR WOMEN

# Miss Representation is a can't-miss documentary

By Jenn Sharp

Betty Ann Heggie is worried that a picture taken of her will be unflattering. Like many women, she is acutely aware of her physical appearance.

"I want you to know that Grace Kelly never allowed anyone to take a picture of her from below," she says with a laugh to Bridges' photographer as he kneels below her to snap the shot.

On March 6, Heggie's Womentorship Foundation is sponsoring a screening of *Miss Representation* at the Broadway Theatre. The documentary, which premiered at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival, explores how the media's misrepresentation of women has led to the underrepresentation of women in positions of power and influence. It features stories from teenage girls and provocative interviews with politicians, journalists, entertainers, activists, and academics.

Heggie says statistics show women have made little progress in climbing the corporate ladder. She is PotashCorp's former senior vice-president. Now retired from the corporate business world, she runs a mentoring program for women through the Edwards School of Business. During her time at PotashCorp, the importance placed on women's appearance became painfully obvious.

"When a man stands up and gives an idea, you listen to what he's got to say first. His appearance is secondary. With women it's exactly the opposite. You look at how they look first and evaluate that before you even think about what they're saying. I just think it's so unfair," she says.

A networking reception will be held prior to the screening. Heggie jumped at the chance to provide a networking event for women. She says women don't have the depth of networks that men have because they're often busy juggling home life with a career.

Following the film, three panellists



Betty Ann Heggie is hosting a screening and discussion of the film *Miss Representation* at the Broadway Theatre on March 6. BRIDGES PHOTO BY ANDREW SPEARIN

will lead a discussion with the audience: CTV Saskatoon's Trish Chevel-dayoff, News Talk Radio's Richard Brown and Susan McDonald, assistant professor of management and marketing at the Edwards School of Business. The Saskatoon screening occurs two days before International Women's Day. The day's 2012 theme is 'connecting girls, inspiring futures.' Heggie feels the theme is a perfect fit with *Miss Representation*'s message: You have to be one to see one.

Heggie says most female roles in the top-grossing films are stereotypical and very few movies feature female leads having intelligent conversations or making influential decisions.

"If you're a young woman going to the movies and you're seeing yourself as the blathering bimbo, the sexy side kick or the crazy ex-girlfriend, that's what they think they're supposed to be."

She refers to a film study released in November by the University of Southern California. Researchers surveyed 2009's top 100-grossing movies and found that only 32.8 per cent of the speaking characters were female.

The study also revealed that women were far more likely than men to wear revealing clothing or to show partial nudity. This trend was just as prevalent among 13- to 20-year-old fe-

male characters, as it was among the 21- to 29-year-old characters.

Heggie hopes the film can change people's behaviour. The documentary has become a hit, with regular screenings in cities across North America. A visit to [www.missrepresentation.org](http://www.missrepresentation.org) shows an active social media campaign. Visitors to the site are asked to take a pledge to promote the film's message.

The site has encouraged visitors to use the Twitter hashtag: #Notbuyingit when they see an ad that misrepresents or degrades women. The hashtag has ignited a global following for people posting descriptions or uploading photos of offending ads.

Recently thousands have called out sexist commercials shown during Super Bowl XLVI and inundated ad companies with requests for change.

Heggie says the more people she can show this film to in Saskatoon the better. She would like to show it in schools and add further public screenings.

"Think global, act local. Globally, women need change and locally, this is something we can do."

The event is free of charge but anyone interested in attending must RSVP via Picatic's website at: [www.picatic.com/ticket/event977569](http://www.picatic.com/ticket/event977569). For further information, visit: [www.facebook.com/events/338534849519948](http://www.facebook.com/events/338534849519948).