

Weinberg film debuts April 30

(As published in *The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking* column on March 30, 2015)

I have known Keith McDaniel since working with him as a member of his historical advisory council for the Secret City documentary films first released in 2005 and ultimately a co-producer of those films. I knew from the start of our friendship that Keith had a special skill for producing documentary films. As I aspired to create documentary films myself, I paid close attention to his process and artistry.

Over the ensuing years, I have been privileged to produce several short documentary films and one documentary film series for East Tennessee Public Television. All of them are based on the style I saw Keith using. Some have won awards as has many of Keith's films.

Keith's Secret City series (*The War Years* and *1945 – 2006*) and the *Clinton 12* (integration in Clinton, TN) have all been awarded at film festivals and the *Clinton 12* has played on several local public television channels. He also created *Open Sesame* (a film about the reenactment of the opening of the gates to Oak Ridge) and the *History of K-25*.

His *40 years of Class* (documentary of the history of Roane State Community College) has won a number of awards. He has hosted the East Tennessee Public Television's *Tennessee Filmmaker with Keith McDaniel* show among other filmmaking efforts such as the Secret City Film Festival which has now morphed into the Knoxville Film Festival and grown to be a very popular and well known film festival.

I am also a huge fan of Alvin Weinberg! Recently I have been contacted by members of the Alvin Weinberg Foundation looking for information on the research Alvin did on the Molten Salt Reactor, something he believed in and worked on even when others stopped believing. Some now are seeking to revive that research and are promoting the use of a thorium reactor. Alvin would be proud, I am sure.

So, the combination of Keith and Alvin has resulted in a grand event and a new documentary film produced in Oak Ridge. I am proud to bring you Carolyn Krause's article in *Historically Speaking* resulting from an interview with Keith and others.

...

April 20, 2015, is the centenary of the birth of the late Alvin M. Weinberg, Oak Ridge's visionary nuclear physicist, scientific administrator, author and humanitarian who was renowned internationally. His hundredth birthday will be celebrated in Oak Ridge and London, England.

Both celebrations will include a premier of the film made by local documentary filmmaker Keith McDaniel. Titled "Alvin Weinberg," the documentary film will be shown free to invitees and the interested public on Thursday, April 23, at the American Museum of Science and Energy.

To reserve a seat, you must call Connor Matthews at 865-705-5890 or Tom Row at 865-705-5174. A reception with speeches will be held at 5 p.m., the first screening will be at 6:30 and the second showing will be at 8 p.m. Crosland Southeast and Capital Mark Bank are sponsoring the reception and screenings.

McDaniel's film will also be shown as part of The Alvin Weinberg Foundation's celebration of Weinberg's centenary. The foundation in London, according to its website "is a charity dedicated to advocating for the urgent research and development of next-generation nuclear energy to tackle climate change and create a clean energy future for all." The film will also be shown to Parliament this summer.

Weinberg published and promoted the concept of the pressurized water reactor, which is largely responsible for 20 percent of the electricity consumed in the U.S. He was director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory for 18 years and founded and directed the Institute for Energy Analysis

Weinberg film debuts April 30

(As published in *The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking* column on March 30, 2015)

at Oak Ridge Associated Universities. He wrote eight books, including one with Nobel Laureate Eugene Wigner, and more than 500 scientific papers. And Weinberg won numerous prestigious awards.

The narrator for the film is Matt Shafer Powell, the award-winning director of news content and executive producer at WUOT, the public radio station at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Powell, like McDaniel, lives in Oak Ridge.

Viewers of the film on Apr. 23 can purchase a Blu Ray disc and digital HD DVD in a package. The film can be dragged from the digital DVD to a computer desktop for viewing. Eventually, it can be downloaded from the Internet for free.

The producers of the film are Connor Matthews, Tom Row and Steve Stow. For seven years, they and other Weinberg committee members actively sought ideas and funding for ways to memorialize Alvin Weinberg, who died Oct. 18, 2006, at home.

It all started when someone proposed commissioning a sculptor to create a statue of Weinberg. Others wanted to purchase a piece of land and plant a memorial garden; rename the Jackson Square tennis courts after Weinberg (who played tennis into his 80s) and establish a lecture series in Weinberg's honor at the Howard H. Baker Center for Public Policy at UT. These ideas were rejected because of cost, politics and the effort required to maintain two proposed projects.

What the committee of Matthews, Row, Stow and others decided to do was to memorialize Weinberg in two ways. First, they had made two bar relief plaques of his likeness with his famous quote about the significance to humanity of the medical radioisotopes produced at ORNL. These three-dimensional plaques were mounted at ORNL's Graphite Reactor and AMSE.

Second, in 2011, Row approached McDaniel about making a one-hour film on DVD about Weinberg that could be shown on public television and used in science classes at high schools, colleges and universities. McDaniel offered his services at a reasonable price. He expressed gratitude that the Weinberg committee "gave me freedom to be creative."

"The purpose of the film is to tell Alvin's story and to honor him and his legacy," McDaniel said in an interview. "I wanted to create a product to let people know who Alvin was. I wanted it to be about him as a person and all the various aspects that made him what he was professionally and personally. I portray him as a fallible human being."

To do the film, McDaniel drew upon many sources. He had interviewed Weinberg for his "Secret City: The Story of Oak Ridge" two-part film series. He read some of Weinberg's publications and articles others had written about him. He drew heavily on Weinberg's 1994 autobiography, "The First Nuclear Era: The Life and Times of a Technological Fixer."

"That book tells not only of his accomplishments but also gives a sense of who he was as a person," McDaniel said. "He revealed some deep personal feelings in the book," such as his responses to his first wife's death and his firing at ORNL.

He interviewed people who knew Weinberg well. He captured comments about Alvin that he had recorded in a few of the 150 oral history interviews he has done for COROH over the past five years. COROH is the Center for Oak Ridge Oral History at the Oak Ridge Public Library.

In the film, the artist in McDaniel "combines music, people talking, photographs and archive film footage in such a way as to tell a story and evoke emotion."

The people interviewed and shown on the film are Richard Weinberg (Alvin's second and only surviving son), Murray Rosenthal (ORNL associate director), Fran Silver, Dave Hobson (ORNL),

Weinberg film debuts April 30

(As published in *The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking* column on March 30, 2015)

Dr. Seaton Garrett (former chief ORNL physician), John Auxier (former ORNL Health Physics Division director), Pat Postma, Bill Burch (ORNL), Ray Wymer (ORNL), Dave Reister (ORAU Institute for Energy Analysis), Payson "Rick" Lyon and Shigeko Uppuluri (who was on the committee with Alvin that brought to Oak Ridge from Japan the International Friendship Bell).

Weinberg's son revealed in the film that Alvin was a "softie" with respect to disciplining his two sons. Richard said that Alvin, who was a bit shy, was nervous about giving his first state-of-the-lab address in 1955 at ORNL. So, the director had a good, stiff drink to calm his nerves and then delivered his talk successfully. Richard also noted that Weinberg saw asteroids as a serious threat to the survival of humankind until after he researched the subject and published a paper on it.

The major sponsor of the Weinberg film is UT-Battelle, which manages ORNL for the Department of Energy. The other sponsors are ORAU, Friends of ORNL, TVA, American Nuclear Society (of which Weinberg was a founder and first president), Oak Ridge Institute for Continued Learning, the Rotary Club of Oak Ridge, Information International Associates and numerous individuals.

Matthews praised McDaniel "for what he is able to do in gathering material and in creatively transforming it into this wonderful work of art. What a great resource this town has in Keith McDaniel." You might even say he's the Ken Burns of Oak Ridge.

...

I agree with Connor! Keith McDaniel has established himself as an icon of Oak Ridge by producing films that tell the history of Oak Ridge. We are the envy of all other cities that have DOE sites. I have been to several and always take Keith's Secret City films to share. Without exception, I am told how they wish they had similar films to document their history.

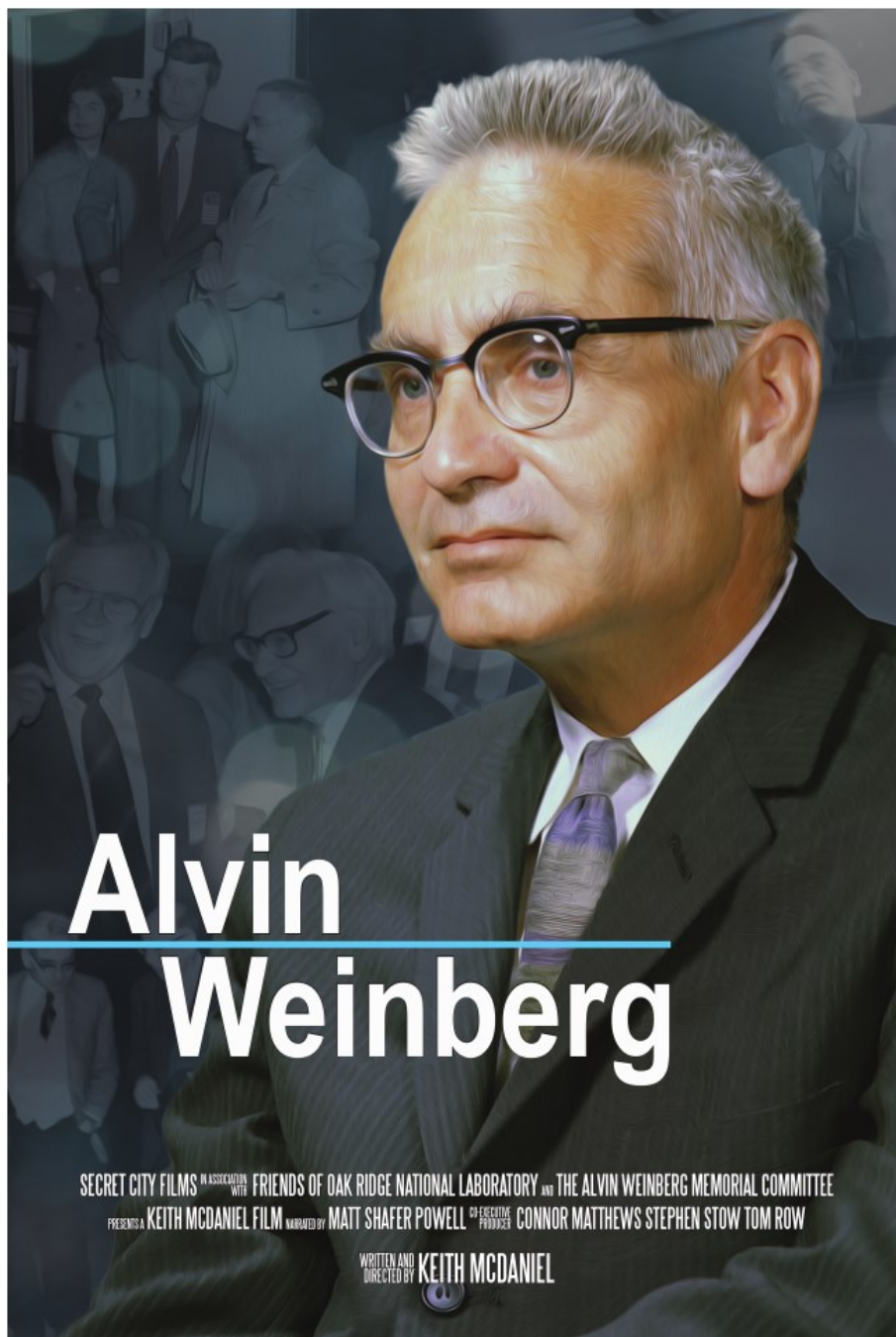
Most recently, the National Park Service visitors working on the Manhattan Project National Historical Park left town with copies of Keith McDaniel produced films.



Keith McDaniel shown in his editing studio

Weinberg film debuts April 30

(As published in *The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking* column on March 30, 2015)



Poster for *Alvin Weinberg* – a Keith McDaniel film