



By Thomas  
White

**Making History: Micheli  
Follows up her 1996 Wolper  
Award with a Short  
Documentary Award**

In the continuing afterglow of the 2008 IDA Awards, we discovered that history was made that night: By winning the Best Short Documentary Award for her and Isabel Vega's *La Corona*, Amanda Micheli became the first IDA/David L. Wolper Student Documentary Achievement Award recipient in the history of the IDA Awards to "graduate" by winning a higher-level award. The Harvard alum earned the Wolper Award in 1996 for her film *Just for the Ride*.

"I was up at this podium back in 1996 with my student film, *Just for the Ride*," Micheli said in her acceptance speech. "And there are countless people in this room, both then and now, that have inspired and enabled my work over the last 12 years, and I'm truly grateful for this community and its support."



Amanda Micheli, center, with director/producer Isabel Vega at the Kodak Awards Luncheon December 5. Photo: Meg Madison.

I followed up a week later about what the Wolper Award meant to her. "Back then, I didn't even know what the IDA was," she admits. "But as soon as I arrived and saw the company I was in, I was blown away, and quite honestly, I was somewhat intimidated by the pressure of expectation. As I gulped champagne, people asked with urgency, "What are you working on next??" —a question that still challenges me to this day at these kind of events.

"I'm a serial monogamist with my films," she continues. "And like many filmmakers, I am wary of talking about new projects before they are 'in the can.' But the mere idea that people *wanted* to see what I was up to next was exciting, and I'd like to think that I rose to the challenge, and will continue to do so on my own timeline. Because my student film was a first-person, vérité project made with short ends and a volunteer crew over a span of many years, it was daunting to try to transform that model into a viable career. But over the years I've come to accept the insanity of it all, and have been lucky enough to have had gainful employment as a DP and producer on other filmmakers' projects while I explore my own work, which has been a real pleasure, even if it is a balancing act."

And as for the Short Documentary Award? "As I said that night, it's an honor to be recognized by such an incredible group of filmmakers, and I feel as privileged as ever to call the IDA membership my peers."