

MEDIA



Maire's

J O U R N E Y

*A young woman's final wish
and the many people that made it possible*



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DIRECTORS / PRODUCERS **KEITH FAMIE JOHN FEIST** EDITOR **JOE GRANT**

MAIRESJOURNEY.COM



24-year-old cancer victim inspires after death

By **Nick Valencia**, CNN

updated 3:40 PM EDT, Tue July 29, 2014

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Maire Kent had cardiac sarcoma, a rare and aggressive form of cancer
- She made a plan to send her ashes on a tiny boat from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic
- Filmmaker Keith Famie documented the boat's journey and how strangers helped out
- "I promised her that we'd get her there. And we did," Famie says

(CNN) -- It was about eight months into her fight with heart cancer that 24-year-old Maire Kent knew she was going to die.

In November 2012, Kent was diagnosed with cardiac sarcoma, a rare and aggressive form of cancer. By the end of September 2013, she was gone.

But it's what happened in the final weeks of her life that made her friends and family feel as if she's still around.

"I met her by chance, actually," filmmaker [Keith Famie](#) told CNN. "I went to the hospital because I was having some chest pains and we ended up having the same doctor. Our conversations took off from there."

Famie happened to be working on a documentary about how people deal with the end of life. So he and Kent decided to document the last leg of her life and her final wishes.

Inspired by her favorite children's book, "Paddle to Sea," in which a boy carves a wooden boat and sets it free in the Great Lakes, Kent turned to her family and said, "I want to do that. I want to go to the ocean. Cremate me and put my ashes in a boat. I want to go from Lake Michigan to the Atlantic Ocean."

"She wanted to create a dialogue about cardiac sarcoma," her older brother Geoff Kent told CNN. "Her dream was to be a nurse, because she loved helping people. She knew she wasn't going to live to achieve that, so this was her way of helping people after she died. We all know someone with cancer."

Sarcoma is a rare type of cancer, and cardiac sarcoma even rarer, according to Dr. Monika Leja, a cardiologist in Ann Arbor, Michigan, who treated Kent, a former Army private.



"It can grow from any part of the body, even connective tissues. It usually happens to very healthy, young, individuals," Leja told CNN. "A purely genetic disease that's rapid growing. It's kind of like having a ticking time bomb in your body and no one is recognizing it."

Three weeks before Kent's life ended, the plans to get her ashes to the Atlantic Ocean began. And Famie was there to document the whole thing.

"It was just a little 3½-foot boat carved out of wood by a totally blind carpenter. That's what she wanted to have her ashes put in," Famie said. "The hope was that, with the

help of strangers, she would have her dream come true. As it turns out, it was kind of like the Olympic torch. People wanted to be part of this journey."





An unpredictable journey that -- keeping true to the story in "Paddle to the Sea"-- would only work with the help of people Kent never met.

To encourage the support, Kent had her family write a message on the small sail of the handcrafted wooden boat:

"My name is Maire. I died of cardiac sarcoma cancer. My ashes are enclosed in this boat and I am on my way to the ocean. If you find me, please send me back on my path. I'll bless you from Heaven."

The boat set sail in Lake Michigan and in the weeks that followed, Kent's ashes would travel by water and over land, riding on everything from planes to trains to the sidecars of motorcycles.

"Cancer is really everybody's story," Famie told CNN. "And Maire knew that. Once the journey started, it was incredible watching people engage the boat. It created a dialogue of life after death. We knew it would resonate with people but we had no idea it would be this strong."

People helped on a whim, like Burton Bogart, who jumped into the Erie Canal to rescue Kent's small boat, which had become stuck in the brush on the riverbank and was at risk of being lost.

"So he runs down the bank of a river, takes his clothes off, swims down the canal and releases her. And people are all clapping and cheering," Famie said, remembering the scene. "But then the boat stops again, directly under this group of 40 people watching it all from a balcony above the river. And I can see this woman is really upset."

Along with Kent's written message on the boat's sail were 12 random names of people Famie had chosen from across the country who, like Kent, had died from cancer. One of the names was George Davis.

"The woman turns to me and says, 'George Davis? That was my dad's name. He died 20 years ago from lung cancer,'" Famie said. "It turns out in life, chance encounters aren't so chance at all."

Before she died, Maire Kent said, "You can't really predict your own future. There's always a road that's going to pop up out of nowhere. And that's why life is a journey."



On July 26, in New York harbor, her journey ended when her ashes made it to the Atlantic Ocean, just as the sun was setting.

"When Maire told me she wanted to do this, I promised her that we'd get her there. And we did," Famie said. "In that little gleaming moment you just knew that you were doing something that was supposed to be done for somebody. It is a transcendental journey. Maire, who nobody knew, so many people will meet."

'Maire's Journey': Cancer victim's dying wish comes closer to fulfillment in CNY



Maire Kent's dying wish was to travel the world and raise awareness of sarcoma cancer. ([facebook.com/mairesjourneytothesea](https://www.facebook.com/mairesjourneytothesea))



By **Geoff Herbert** | gtherbert@syracuse.com

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on July 18, 2014 at 10:13 AM, updated July 18, 2014 at 10:29 AM

When a Michigan woman was diagnosed with cardiac sarcoma, it was the beginning of a journey. And though the brave Maire (pronounced "Mary") Kent lost her battle on September 27, 2013, her mission continues on today.

Kent's dying wish was to travel the world, calling more attention to the disease that took her life and so many others. She chose to be cremated and have her ashes put in a boat that would travel from Lake Michigan to the Atlantic Ocean, spreading awareness along its path.

Producer-director Keith Famie has been chronicling her story for an upcoming documentary, and the project comes closer to fulfillment in the Syracuse area this weekend.

A small sailboat, crafted by a blind carpenter, was launched from Cross Village, Mich. on July 12. The three-foot pine boat carries Kent's ashes, photos of sarcoma cancer victims, a GPS device and a stirring message:

"My name is Maire; I died of cardiac sarcoma cancer. My ashes are enclosed in this boat and I am on my way to the ocean. If you find me, please set me back on my path. I will bless you from Heaven. If I have reached the ocean, please let my brothers and sister know. You can reach them through my Facebook page '**Maire's Journey.**'"



[+ View full size](#)

'Maire's Journey' is a documentary following a little boat's trip from Michigan to the Atlantic Ocean to raise awareness for sarcoma cancer.

facebook.com/mairesjourneytothesea

Famie, a 10-time Emmy Award winner, is filming "Maire's Journey" on its way to New Jersey and eventually the ocean. The boat is expected to pass through Central New York this weekend as it continues traveling east.

Filming continues through July. Pictures will be posted on social media along the way at facebook.com/mairesjourneytothesea.

The documentary aims to catch people's reactions to the little watercraft and whether they'll help it reach the ocean. Produced by Visionalist Entertainment Productions, the film also hopes to raise global awareness of soft tissue sarcomas, which the Mayo Clinic describes as cancerous tumors that originate in soft tissues such as muscle, fat, blood vessels and nerves.

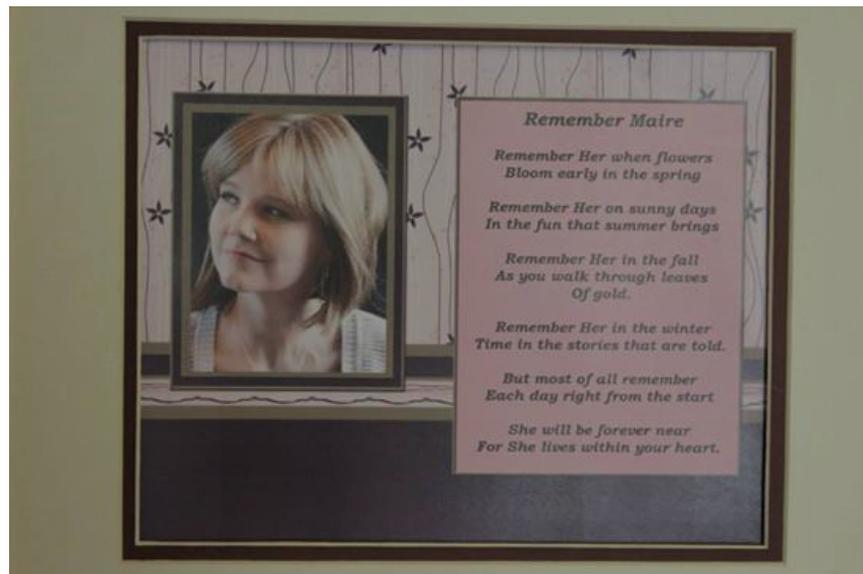


"Unfortunately, more than 14,000 people are diagnosed with sarcoma and nearly 6,000 patients pass away from this rare cancer each year," Dr. Bert E. Thomas, CEO of Sarcoma Foundation of America, said in a press release. "Sharing Maire's story with the world serves not only as a

powerful tribute to her, but shines a light on this often forgotten cancer, helping to raise awareness for the thousands of patients like Maire who are in their own fight against sarcoma."



The University of Michigan has set up the Maire Kent Memorial Fund for Sarcoma and Cardiac Tumor Research, and supporters are invited to donate at mairesjourney.com.



http://www.syracuse.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2014/07/maires_journey_documentary_sarco_ma_cancer_maire_kent.html

Seeking the sea

Fim depicts the fulfillment of cancer victim's last request

by Al Sullivan
Reporter staff writer
Sep 24, 2016

Maire Kent always knew the rare type of cancer she had in her heart would kill her. While her doctors sought to buy her time through an extensive sequence of chemotherapy, this often left her dazed and confused. But not about one thing – her last wish.

Before and after her death in 2013, Maire (pronounced Mary) became the subject of an unusual documentary called “Maire’s Journey,” one of the films at this year’s Golden Door International Film Festival in Jersey City.

Maire learned at age 23 that she had a life-ending cancer, called Sarcoma. This is a rare cancer that can begin in the connective tissues anywhere in the body, but the absolute worse place is in the heart. The only cure is to completely remove it – an impossibility when in the heart.

From the start, Maire accepted the fact that her disease could not likely be cured. But she continued treatment hoping to control the cancer and extend her life – for a short while, at least.

Her doctor, Monika Leja, one of the nation’s very few cardio oncologists, along with Dr. Rashmi Chugh, had made it their mission to try to find a way to shrink the tumor so Maire could be a possible candidate for a highly specialized heart surgery procedure.

But one night when she and filmmaker Keith Famie were returning from one of those experimental treatments, Maire turned to Famie told him she wanted her ashes spread in the sea.

As a young girl, she had read the book “Paddle to the Sea,” about a Native American who had made the journey to the sea by canoe. She wanted her ashes to go to the ocean and be spread there.

Famie told her he had a blind friend who built urns, and said this friend might be able to build a boat. She was pleased. The coffin maker, George Wurtzel, agreed to make a boat that would transport Maire’s remains and photos of others who lost the battle to cancer.

Thus began a journey that took her ashes across half a continent and in and out of the lives of scores of people who had not expected to take part in this epic journey, each step documented as a tribute to Maire’s remarkable life.

An award-winning documentary film maker already, Famie had been working on a film series about death and kept waking up with chest pains. He called a doctor who said e should go to an emergency room. He said no, and his doctor recommended a local heart specialist, who, after tests, found nothing wrong. But when the doctor heard about Famie’s film project, he suggested he meet Maire.

She was facing a tough road. Over the months, Famie got to know her, and realized that this person

needed to have her story told, and not as part of another series.

Maire had family, but they were not in a position to help. So he did, and part of their adventure together included visits to various places such as an after life conference, and the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC. She even got to see a concert by her favorite performer, Kenny Chesney.

The long strange trip to the sea

Maire died on Sept. 27, 2013. The boat was launched in July 2014.

“We had no idea how Marie was going to get to the ocean,” Famie said.

The six week journey involved planes, boats, trains, cars, even the side car of a motorcycle driven by a veteran from Vietnam

“If no one helped her, she would still be floating,” he said

Maire’s ashes journeyed 1400 miles from Lake Michigan to Jersey City where she eventually had her wish fulfilled.

“The whole story is about faith on so many levels,” Famie said. “Not so much in a religious sense, but a spiritual sense. How people came to help, managing to pull it off.”

In some ways the journey retraced what American myth has referred to as the northwest passage, going along rivers and canals leading eventually leading to New York Harbor, helped by a paddle boat operator on the Erie Canal and by a series of events that led to her train ride south.

Setting off from Lake Michigan in a boat especially constructed for this trip by a blind boat builder, Maire’s journey became a large puzzle which perfect strangers helped to complete, in order that she would be able to achieve her dying wish. Each person called on to act responded when need presented itself.

The three-foot boat, which resembles a miniature rowboat or sail boat, was decorated with images of other cancer victims and set into the current, mostly propelled by wind and current.

“We always envisioned this journey to include assorted means of transportation, including boat, plane and train,” Famie said.

As it turned out, that’s exactly what transpired. Although no one made firm plans, just put it out there in the universe hoping it would happen, people stepped up and did their part

Before they left Michigan, Famie figured they would have to travel to the Hudson River to get to New York City. The filmmaker and crew followed the boat with her ashes, using a boat with camera crew, drones and other equipment. But they did not interfere with the story, letting events unfold.

“This story is everybody’s story,” he said. “People stepped in. There always were a lot of questions as how this would happen”

In places when things seemed like they would stall, people stepped up, such as one of two men who helped find train travel for another part.



At one point, when Maire's boat became stranded on a reef, a young man dove into the water and helped dislodge it.

Famie was in a restaurant overlooking the river and several women started paying attention to the scene being shot outside on the river. The boat later got stuck again nearer the restaurant. One of the women gasped, pointing to one of the names painted on the side of the boat. At the beginning of the trip, the boat builder had painted the names of cancer victims on the hull. One of the names was the same as the woman in the restaurant husband. While it was not the same person, it was among the strange coincidences of the trip.

"Things like this happened along the trip," Famie said.

Maire's ashes were moved into different vehicles at different parts of the trip, so that she arrived eventually in Jersey City by train, rather than water.

Eventually, they got help getting down to the river, and came to Jersey City Harbor near Liberty State Park. The problem was how to get her ashes out into the harbor. He said he didn't want to row them out in a row boat, but wanted to do it in style.

"We have come so far and gotten so close, but it seemed so far away. We had no way to get her out," Famie said.

The commander of the yacht club helped arrange to meet a yacht owner who brought the ashes out, sailing into the sunset.

"Many of the people along this trip found comfort because it reflected some issue in their own lives," he said, "a loved one who has passed on."

The trip for him provided closure since he had become very close with Maire during their brief time together.

Al Sullivan may be reached at asullivan@hudsonreporter.com.

'Maire's Journey' complete as ashes reach eastern shore



[Lisa Roose-Church](#) , Livingston Daily 6:06 a.m. EDT October 12, 2016



(Photo: Visionalist Entertainment Productions)

The completion of a young woman's final wish and the people who made it possible are featured in a new documentary, partially filmed in Livingston County.

The completion of a young woman's final wish and the people who made it possible are featured in a new documentary, partially filmed in Livingston County.

"[Maire's Journey](#)" tells the story of Maire Kent, who was diagnosed with cardiac sarcoma, a rare cancer of the heart. The 24-year-old woman, whose name is pronounced "Mary," lost her battle against the disease in 2013 and her dying wish was to have her ashes placed in a wooden sailboat so she could "go to the ocean."

"It was a big surprise to me and it's completely changed how I expected my life to be," Kent said about learning she had cancer in the film.

The documentary, a portion of which was filmed at Borek Jennings Funeral Home in Howell, has toured film festivals and makes its Michigan premiere Saturday at the Royal Starr Film Festival. It also will be featured at the Indie Lounge at Sundance.

Director Keith Famie of [Visionalist Entertainment Productions](#) will also release his companion book, "[Maire's Journey to the Sea](#)," at that time. The book has a detailed story about Kent's fight with cancer and what Famie learned from her. Two dollars of each sale go to the University of Michigan's Maire Kent Memorial Fund for Sarcoma and Cardiac Tumor Research.

In the documentary, Kent shares her fears and she explains that her final wish is based on a childhood book, "Paddle-to-the-Sea," which is a story about an Indian boy who carves a wooden model of an Indian in a boat that the boy wants to reach the ocean.



Maire Kent, who was diagnosed with cardiac sarcoma, wished to have her ashes carried out to the ocean. Her ashes are in the small wooden boat seen in the foreground. (Photo: Visionalist Entertainment Productions)

“It’s about how people pick him up and set him free,” Kent explains in the movie. “I want to do that. I want to go to the ocean.”

The documentary follows Kent’s boat’s 14,000-mile journey from the Great Lakes of northern Michigan to the Eastern Seaboard, and the “many people” who made it possible, including [George Wurtzel](#), a blind carpenter who built the 3-foot wooden boat carrying Kent’s ashes. Also in the boat were photographs of others who lost their lives to cancer and on the boat’s sail was Kent’s posthumous message:

“My name is Maire. I died of cardiac sarcoma cancer. This boat has my ashes in it, and I’m making my way to the ocean. If you find me, please set me back on my path. I will bless you from heaven. If I have reached the ocean, please let my brothers and sisters know. You can reach them on my Facebook page, [‘Maire’s Journey.’](#)”

In addition, Famie's movie, "[Death is Not the Answer](#)," will debut Nov. 6 at Emagine Royal Oak on North Main Street in Royal Oak. The two-part film debut, which includes scenes of veterans with the Pinckney Community High School cross country team, will air 8 p.m. Nov. 11 on PBS.



Visionalist Entertainment Productions film crew films a scene from the documentary "Maire's Journey," about Maire Kent, who died of cardiac sarcoma. (Photo: Visionalist Entertainment Productions)

<http://www.livingstondaily.com/story/news/local/community/livingston-county/2016/10/12/maires-journey-complete-ashes-reach-eastern-shore/91543224/>

JULY 31, 2014 AT 1:00 AM

Maire's journey

A life cut short by cancer, an endless voyage, and a message to others

NEAL RUBIN 1 COMMENTS



Maire Kent floated off into the Atlantic Ocean on Saturday, bound for parts and adventures unknown.

That was 14 days after she set sail on Lake Michigan.

It was 10 months after she died.

Maire had cardiac sarcoma, a primary tumor of the heart. Rare and vicious and fatal. She also had a way of affecting people.

Her friends will tell you she still does — and one of them promises that Maire is only getting started.

That friend is Keith Famie, who we first knew as a chef, then as a reality show contestant. Now, at 54, he's a filmmaker whose documentaries have won 10 local Emmys.

He's the one who first suggested to Maire, pronounced "Mary," that her ashes sail away in their own little boat.

He's also the one who regretted it as soon as she said, "That would be really cool."

What boat? How? For that matter, why?

The last question was the only one with an easy answer. Because she wanted it, because she deserved it, because so many others might learn from it or take joy from it.

"My name is Maire," said the note on the sail of the 3-foot-long vessel that Famie's cameras tracked from a beach in Emmet County to New York Harbor.

It explained how she died, and that she was on her way to the ocean. "If you find me," it requested, "please set me back on my path. I will bless you from Heaven."

Spreading her story

Maire Kent grew up in southwest Detroit. She was near the middle in a pack of 10 kids in a family that ultimately moved to Gaines, a village of 380 people about 15 miles southwest of Flint.

She marched off to join the Army when she was 18. Later, she was an aide at a nursing home in Commerce Township. Later still, swollen with edema, she was a patient there, dependent on a wheelchair.

She died at 24. Then the rest of her story began.

The story includes a blind carpenter named George Wurtzel, who went to school with Stevie Wonder. He built the boat, which also carried the names and photos of a dozen other sarcoma victims.

It includes a former producer and director on “Survivor” named John Feist, who shares those roles with Famie on a movie they’re calling “Maire’s Journey.”



It includes a flotilla of kind people who encountered the boat, equipped with GPS, as the film crew tracked its journey. “What should I do with it?” the strangers would ask.

“That’s up to you,” Famie would say.

Student sailors from the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club

towed it ashore. Patriot Guard Riders carried it in a sidecar from Belle Isle to the River Raisin. A lumberjack fished it out of the Straits of Mackinac. Two elderly gents along the Erie Canal route whisked it by train to Penn Station in New York.

At the yacht club, the commodore blanched; his ex-wife had the same disease and doctor as Maire, and died a week before she did. As the boat ran aground on a bank of the Erie Canal, a woman read the name of one of the sarcoma casualties and screamed: It was the same as her father’s.

“The story,” Famie says, “became everybody’s story.”

A chance meeting

He and Maire met because he'd gone to see her cardiologist for a chest pain that disappeared the morning after he and Maire first spoke.

They bonded immediately, he says. Sometimes he would take her to chemotherapy. Once he and the doctor broke her out of the hospital for a Kenny Chesney concert.

Ultimately, inevitably, she made her final escape.

A sister and two of her brothers were aboard a motor boat Saturday when it came time to say goodbye. Behind them was Manhattan. Above them stood the Statue of Liberty.



The little boat and the pictures of the other casualties would come home to Famie's office. The ashes, her family shook gently into the water.

He's hoping to have her movie finished by spring. He's not sure where it will go; film festivals, probably, and in a perfect world, someplace like HBO.

Every premiere will raise money for research, he says. That he knows.

What he hopes is that the people who see "Maire's Journey" will be as touched as he was by a buoyant young woman and the strangers who helped her sail away.



Young woman's ashes float down Hudson River on small sailboat

Posted: Jul 22, 2014 3:01 PM EDT



By Rachel Yonkunas - [email](#)

WATERFORD, N.Y. - There was a unique sight along the Hudson River on Wednesday as the ashes of a 24-year-old woman were carried in a small wooden sailboat.

Maire Kent, of Michigan, died in September from Cardiac Sarcoma, a rare cancer of the heart.

However, before she passed she told Keith Famie that she wanted to raise awareness for the disease by sailing to the Atlantic Ocean where her ashes would be scattered.

"It's really about how humanity comes together and chooses to help her and why they want to help her what's the reason for that," said Famie.

Famie says as soon as strangers heard the story, they offered to help.

"It's touching to see how many people's lives it impacts when they come in contact with Maire and how it affects them and the dialogue it creates about cancer and family and what happens when we die," said Famie.

Donna Larkin crossed paths with Maire on Wednesday morning on the Hudson River in Waterford. She offered to take Maire's ashes to Albany.

"It's just been, I'm so, I've got goose bumps just bringing her down here and hopefully pass her off to somebody else going to New York City for her final destination," said Larkin.

So far, dozens of people have helped the small boat travel hundreds of miles.

<http://www.news10.com/story/26083441/young-womans-ashes-float-down-hudson-river-on-small-sailboat>





Tiny boat carrying woman's ashes passes through Albany

Updated: 07/22/2014 6:22 PM Created: 07/22/2014 6:15 PM WNYT.com
By: Steve Flamisch



ALBANY – A tiny pine sailboat carrying the ashes of a young Michigan woman passed through the Capital Region on Tuesday as part of a 1,400-mile journey that has made headlines across the country, and will ultimately end up on the big screen.

Marie Kent died on September 27, 2013 of cardiac sarcoma, a rare cancer of the heart. Inspired by a favorite book, Kent wanted her ashes to travel by boat from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean: a journey that requires help from total strangers.

"I love the water, love sports, everything she stood for," said Donna Larkin, a power-boarder who helped guide the boat on the Hudson River from Waterford to Albany. "(If) everyone can help out along the way, well good for us for being there for her."

Larkin and several kayakers carried the boat – crafted by a blind carpenter, and painted by a Native American – into the Waterfront Bar and Grill. There, Larkin convinced an old friend, Claus Geiger, to continue the journey southward.

"We're going to take her down as far as we can," said Geiger, who was planning to transport the boat by car from Albany to Ravena with his friend, Ed Hines. "I think it's great that people are willing to take her down along the journey... and now I'm one of them."

A documentary film crew from Visionalist Entertainment Productions chronicled the last eight months of Kent's life, her death, and her continuing journey to the sea. It's expected to premiere at film festivals next year, executive producer Keith Famie said.

"The question was, 'How is a little sailboat going to make it all the way to the ocean? It's impossible,' Famie said. "It is impossible, but what's not impossible is how it touches people's lives and how people want to come out and help the boat."

When the boat finally reaches its destination somewhere off the coast of New Jersey, some of Kent's loved ones will fly in from Michigan. Kent's last wish was that her ashes be spilled into the Atlantic Ocean, so she can travel the world in death.

<http://wnyt.com/article/stories/S3511330.shtml>

Emmy Award winning Visionalist Entertainment Productions was established in 2004 by Producer/Director Keith Famie. Since these early years, Famie and his team have produced a wide range of primetime programs.

MICHIGAN EMMY AWARD WINNERS

- Taste of Taiwan (2006)**
On-Camera Talent – Keith Famie
- Our Italian Story (2006)**
Human Interest Special & Best Director
- Our Polish Story (2007)**
- Our Greek Story (2007)**
Best Cultural Documentary
Best Human Interest Program Special
- Our Arab American Story (2007)**
Societal Concerns Program Special
- Our India Story (2008)**
Best Documentary Cultural
- Detroit: Our Greatest Generation (2009)**
Editor/Program
- Our Vietnam Generation (2011)**
Documentary Historical
- The Embrace of Aging:**
The female perspective of growing old
Director – Post – Production



DOCUMENTARIES

- Ice Warriors:** An action-packed journey with the Red Wings Alumni team through Russia
- Our Italian Story:** Progress, passion and promise – Detroit’s Italian heritage
- Our Arab American Story:** Reverence, resourcefulness and respect,- Detroit’s Arab American Heritage
- Our Greek Story:** Antiquity, modernity, and destiny- Detroit’s Greek Heritage
- Our Polish Story:** Family, faith and fortitude- Detroit’s Polish Heritage
- Our India Story:** Amity, diversity and sovereignty- Detroit’s Indian Heritage
- Can you see how I see? :** An inspiring look into the life of those in our society who are without sight
- Detroit: Our Greatest Generation:** A tribute to our Michigan WWII veterans, both men and women, who fought for the freedom of our families and our country
- Our Vietnam Generation:** A long overdue welcome home to the men and women who served during Vietnam
- One Soldier’s Story:** the profound story of Sgt. Michael Ingram, Jr. and his legacy
- The Embrace of Aging:** 13-part series on women and 7-part series on men
- The Embrace of Dying:** 8-part series on how we deal with the end of life
- Maire’s Journey:** Follow Maire Kent as she sets sail on an epic journey to fulfill her dying wish
- Death is NOT the Answer:** A deep look into the complex world of depression and suicide
- Enlisted:** Choice. Adventure. Growth. Why would one enlist in the military?
- Those on the Front Lines of Alzheimer’s & Dementia:** What can be done to stop this truly devastating disease?
- Those on the Front Lines of Cancer:** Can the uncommon journey that cancer patients undergo result in anything positive?
- Blessed Solanus Casey’s Journey to Sainthood:** We delve deep into who the man in the habit was and what this will mean to the Motor City and the world.

EMMY AWARD NOMINATIONS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Embrace of Dying (2018)
Editor-Program | A Day in the Life of Elijah (2018)
Public/Curren Affairs |
| Death is NOT the Answer (2016)
Public/Current/Community Affairs Director-Non-Live | Enlisted (2018) Editor-Program |
| A Day in the Life of Elijah (2018)
Public/Current Affairs | A Day in the Life of Elijah (2018)
Education Schools |
| Enlisted (2018) Documentary-Topical | Those on the Front Lines of Alzheimer's and Dementia (2019)
Documentary-Topical |
| A Day in the Life of Elijah (2018)
Education Schools | |

VISIONALIST ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTIONS

- 2015 - **The Association for Women in Communications - Detroit Chapter - Diamond Award (Keith Famie)**
- 2016 - **Royal Starr Film Festival - Best Documentary- Second Runner Up- Mp Maire’s Journey**
- 2017 - **Gilda’s Club Metro Detroit Media Award**
- 43 **Annual MCA- I Media Festival- Bronze Reel- One Soldier’s Story**
- 2020 - **New, impactful productions underway**

Maire’s Journey Festival Awards



Keith Famie
Director/Producer



Director/Producer Keith Famie was, for many years, known as a celebrity chef and a metro Detroit restaurateur. He was selected as one of America's "Best New Chefs" in 1989 by Food and Wine magazine; Esquire Magazine chose his restaurants as "Best New Restaurant" in America on two separate occasions. Famie was also a finalist on the 2001 reality television series, "Survivor, the Australian Outback."

Keith hosted his own Food Network series, "Keith Famie's Adventures," traveling the world documenting cooking styles from the plains of Africa to monk monasteries of Taiwan, to the lifestyle of Key West. In 2004, the Adventure Chef embarked on a new journey - documentary filmmaking. "I didn't want to be the 'Adventure Chef' guy anymore. I wanted to help people tell their stories."

Since that life-changing decision, Famie has been awarded eleven Michigan Emmys and been nominated several other times for his rich, human-interest storytelling, from ethnic documentaries to military tribute films. He and his team at Visionalist Entertainment Productions create informative, entertaining films that touch a wide audience.

In 2013, Keith produced a seven-part series called "The Embrace of Aging, the male perspective of growing old," which aired on PBS Detroit in 2013. And in 2015, Famie received his 11th Emmy for "The Embrace of Aging, the female perspective of growing old," the second 13-part film series in this trilogy.

In 2016, Visionalist Entertainment launched the eight part series "The Embrace of Dying" how we deal with the end of life on DPTV/ PBS. "Maire's Journey," was completed after almost three years, a touching story about a 24-year-old cancer patient and the amazing journey she made in her afterlife. The film toured several film festivals. In November of that year, a two-hour film titled "Death Is Not the Answer," which looks at the complicated and emotional subject of depression and suicide, aired on DPTV/PBS in December 2016 and was nominated for two Michigan Emmys.

In 2017, Famie and his team at Visionalist Entertainment debuted a short 18-minute film "A day in the life of Elijah." The audience steps into the life of the 6'3" 17-year-old Elijah Craft from Detroit who shares his quest to learn to read as a senior in High school after being tested to find out he was at a third-grade reading level. Elijah's love for his mother and dedication to better himself is heartwarming and inspirational. This was awarded the Merit Award at the Global Shorts International film festival in Los Angeles. Famie and team also debuted on DPTV/PBS "Enlisted" which explores the reasons why young people join the military.

2018 was a productive year at Visionalist Entertainment Productions with the release on PBS of "Those on the Front Lines of Alzheimer's & Dementia", which was nominated for a Michigan Emmy the following year. In the Fall of 2019, Keith and his team released "Those on the Front Lines of Cancer" followed by a winter release of "Blessed Solanus Casey's Journey to Sainthood". Also released in 2019 is Keith's new book *Living Through the Lens*, <http://www.keithfamie.com/>. 2020 is off to a busy start with production plans underway for two documentaries including "Walk the Walk: Detroit's youth's side of the story" and "My Life's Purpose". For more information, please visit <https://www.v-prod.com/>.

Outside of documentary production, Keith is involved in many charitable projects. In 2015, he was awarded the 2015 Diamond Award by the Association for Women in Communications Detroit Chapter. In 2017, Keith was presented the Media Award by the Gilda's Club of Metro Detroit. Over the years, Keith has been actively involved in several well-respected, Michigan-based 501(c)(3) organizations that support everything from children with cancer and hunger relief to veterans' issues.