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Lawrence University

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Lawrence University may be able to claim TWO Emmy Award winners this fall.

Eric Simonson, a 1982 Lawrence graduate, directed the 2010 HBO documentary “Studs Terkel: Listening to America,” which was nominated in the Outstanding Historical Programming – Long Form category of the news and documentary Emmy Awards.

The documentary examines the life and career of legendary author and radio and television pioneer, who died at age 96 in 2008, just six months after his final interview for the film. Award-winning journalist Linda Ellerbee served as one of the production’s executive producers.

“The Emmy nomination is really more of an honor to Studs Terkel,” said Simonson, a Wisconsin native who grew up in Eagle. “Studs was a good friend and a hero of mine and I miss him, so I’m glad the film received a nomination in that regard.”
An accomplished theatre, film and opera director as well as playwright, Simonson is a two-time Academy Award nominee and a 2006 Oscar winner for his documentary short “A Note of Triumph: The Golden Age of Norman Corwin.” He earned his first Academy Award nomination in 2001 as director of the HBO documentary short “On Tiptoe: Gentle Steps to Freedom,” which profiled the South African singing group Ladysmith Black Mambazo. That film also earned Simonson an Emmy nomination.

He also directed Steppenwolf Theatre’s “The Song of Jacob Zulu” on Broadway, which received six Tony Award nominations in 1993, including one for best director.

More recently, Simonson wrote the script for the play “Lombardi,” a biographical drama based on the life of the legendary Green Bay Packers head coach, which debuted at New York City’s Circle in the Square Theater in Oct. 2010.

Winners in 42 categories of the news and documentary Emmy Awards will be announced Monday, Sept. 26, in New York City by the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.

Garth Neustadter, a 2010 Lawrence graduate, earned a 2011 Primetime Emmy nomination for original dramatic score in the Outstanding Music Composition category for his work while still a student on the American Masters documentary “John Muir in The New World,” which aired on PBS in April. Those awards will be announced on Sept. 18 from Los Angeles.