

JEFF FRIDAY
President & CEO
Film Life, Inc./ABFF Ventures LLC.

Jeff Friday is a true “change agent” and among the most innovative entrepreneurs in the entertainment industry today.

Television producer, festival director, film financier, champion of diversity and mentor to many, Jeff has established a unique legacy in Hollywood building a tremendous amount of goodwill within both the corporate milieu and the creative community.

Jeff entered the entertainment business in 1996 when he became president of UniWorld Films, a division of UniWorld Group, Inc., that provided advertising services to film distributors. Under his direction, the company began to work with major studios to market movies, including DreamWorks’ *Amistad*, to the African American audience.

After attending the Sundance Film Festival for the first time in 1997, he realized that Black filmmakers did not have access to the same opportunities their mainstream counterparts had. Three months later, Jeff acquired the Acapulco Black Film Festival as an industry retreat and market for Black cinema. He moved the festival stateside and renamed it the American Black Film Festival (ABFF). The festival is viewed as a vehicle to connect Hollywood insiders with the independent Black film community. In its first year, Jeff was able to secure HBO as the Founding Sponsor. The immediate success of the festival put him at the forefront of the Black film movement and fueled his commitment to promote diversity throughout the industry.

In 2001, Jeff founded Film Life, a multifaceted entertainment company that focuses on advocating for diversity as much as it does on the “bottom line.” Today, the ABFF is regarded as one of the top film festivals globally, attracting more than 10,000 attendees and top-tier partners including HBO, Comcast-NBCUniversal, BET Networks, Cadillac, Moet Hennessy, Prudential, McDonald’s, Facebook and Google. This year the ABFF celebrated its 20th anniversary.

At the core of Friday’s legacy is his track record and keen sense for identifying young people who have the talent and commitment to succeed in Hollywood. Ryan Coogler (*Creed*, *Fruitvale Station*), Will Packer (*Ride Along*, *Think Like A Man*), Omari Hardwick (*Power*) and Emayatzy Corinealdi (*Roots*, *Miles Ahead*) are among those who credit Jeff Friday and the ABFF for changing the trajectory of their career.

Jeff has also made a significant contribution to television programming by creating and executive producing three shows to date.. *ABFF Honors: A Celebration of Hollywood* (BET, 2016 and 2017) and the *Black Movie Awards* (TNT, 2005 & 2006) were both breakthrough star-studded specials recognizing Black achievements in film and television. *ABFF Independent*, a two-hour weekly program showcases films made by or about people of African descent, is currently in its sixth season airing on Magic Johnson’s cable network ASPIRE.

Further expanding his efforts to provide opportunities for new voices in entertainment, Jeff created the NFL Pro-Hollywood Boot Camp, an intensive film education workshop for National Football League players aspiring to foster a career in the motion picture industry, post-sports career.

In 2013, in partnership with the City of Miami Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), Jeff created the Miami Film Life Center, a community arts program and institute with a focus on

education, job training and the professional development of underprivileged youth in the film industry.

In late 2014, Jeff and Black Enterprise president and CEO Earl “Butch” Graves Jr. announced the formation of ABFF Ventures, a partnership of Film Life and Black Enterprise to expand the global footprint of the ABFF brand. Jeff currently serves as its president and CEO. Under his leadership, the company recently launched ABFF Films, , its motion picture production arm, and announced a partnership with Lightbox, a multiplatform media company focused on creating high-quality non-fiction programming to further diversity in the feature documentary arena.

Committed to the belief that Black artists deserve the same opportunities as their mainstream counterparts, Jeff continues to devote his time and energy working to achieve that goal. He is often called upon to speak to students, from Howard to Harvard universities, as well as industry executives about film marketing and distribution, and issues related to diversity in Hollywood.

Principled and uncompromising, Jeff’s professional efforts have been covered in numerous publications, including *Variety*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, *Crain’s, INC*, *Black Enterprise*, *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Chicago Tribune* among others. He has been profiled on NBC’s *Good Day New York*, *Fox Business* and ABC’s *Here and Now*, and featured in print advertising campaigns for such brands as Walmart, Allstate and Chanel. Friday was named one of *Black Enterprise* magazine’s “Top 50 Hollywood Power Brokers” and *Ebony* magazine’s “150 Most Influential Blacks in America.” His honors include ringing the NASDAQ closing bell to celebrate the American Black Film Festival, receiving the key to the city of Miami and Miami Beach, and being presented with Kean University’s Outstanding New Jerseyans Award. In addition, “Jeff Friday Day” has been proclaimed in his hometown of Newark, NJ. Jeff is also a member of the Writers Guild of America East.

Jeff boasts more than twenty-five years of success as an entertainment executive, entrepreneur and consumer product marketer. One of his first jobs was working at Schiefflin & Somerset Co. as Brand Manager for Hennessy Cognac. He was the first African American in the company’s history to hold such a position.

A cum laude graduate of Howard University, with a degree in finance, Jeff received his MBA in Marketing from New York University’s Leonard Stern School of Business.

Jeff Friday currently resides in New Jersey with his wife, Nicole, and their children.