



Catching My Breath

The Life and Races of Athlete Ken Thomas

Profile of Lorna Thomas
Producer, Director, Writer, Teacher

Lorna is a producer, director and writer of television documentaries, with a special affinity for stories that demonstrate effective social action. As well as producing work for her company, Lorna Thomas Productions Inc., Lorna has collaborated with other film and video organizations, including the National Film Board of Canada. She directed *Stir it Up*, about collective kitchens, for the NFB in 1994. *Beating the Streets* was a co-production with the NFB and had its television premiere on CBC Newsworld's documentary series *Rough Cuts*. The film, which Lorna directed and co-produced, was about two inner city aboriginal teenagers and their determination to turn their lives around with the help of their drama teacher. It won BEST PICTURE at the Dreamspeakers International Film Festival 1998.



In 2000 Lorna produced and directed *Phyllis' Miracle*, a half-hour documentary for Vision TV about a young mother who experiences a series of miracles while fighting breast cancer. It won Best Documentary Under 30 Minutes at the 2001 AMPA Awards for excellence in Alberta film production. In 2002 she partnered with Trick Rider Productions to produce *Pretty Ladies, Fast Horses: Cowgirls of the 21st Century* for Global Television. The film won bronze in the sports category at the Houston International Film Festival 2003. *Riding the Rails to Edmonton* (2004), a short film produced for Alberta's centennial, shares Eldon Haug's experience of riding a freight train from Saskatoon to Edmonton during the Great Depression of the 1930s. In 2005 Lorna directed and co-produced *Radio Worth Fighting For* about the fight to save CKUA, Canada's oldest public broadcaster. The premiere of this film drew an audience of over 1800 people when it was screened at the Francis Winspear Center for Music.

In 2008 Lorna produced, directed and wrote *Catching My Breath*, her most personal work to date. She narrates this documentary about her brother, wheelchair athlete Ken Thomas, and his determination to compete in the World Masters Games. The film is also about Ken's life-long fight for inclusion and independence as a person with a physical disability.

In addition to working as a filmmaker, Lorna is also a teacher (B.A., M.Ed.) who has taught in both public schools and at the University of Alberta. Currently she teaches workshops and classes on producing and directing documentaries, often at FAVA (the Film and Video Arts Society of Alberta). She believes that anyone is capable of making a documentary that is a "creative treatment of reality," given that cameras and editing suites are now in the hands of the people.