

LIFECASTERS

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Lifecasters is an innovative program that unites fiction and documentary filmmakers to tell the stories of Americans who have discovered creative ways of realizing their dreams—a bit later in life. Each of *Lifecasters*' three segments is directed by a pair of award-winning filmmakers from different professional backgrounds, giving each team a platform to tell an inspiring story.

Oscar®-nominated filmmakers Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert tell the story of African-American dancer Sherri “Sparkle” Williams, one of the oldest female professional dancers still practicing in the United States. Williams is a 49-year old dancer in Ohio, and she has been dancing for 38 years. Though she never had a traditional dancer’s body, Williams worked hard to overcome her physical limitations in order to compete and perform incredible moves. Dance helped her to deal with many tragedies and personal challenges in her life. Recently, Williams suffered an achilles ankle injury, but she is determined to recover and perform in her unprecedented 39th season. But the community and outside dancers wonder—at her age and in her condition—can she really still compete?

In the second segment of *Lifecasters*, Emmy-nominated filmmakers, Aron Gaudet and Gita Pullapilly provide a portrait of Albert Hurwit, a retired doctor with a special love for music. For his whole life Hurwit heard music in his head, but when he failed a college music theory exam his dream of music died. Instead of pursuing a life in music he became a Harvard and Tufts educated doctor. Then, after almost seven decades of listening to the music in his head he retired from his successful practice, bought a roomful of computers and keyboards, and at the age of 80, composed an award-winning symphony.

Hollywood filmmakers Adam McKay and Shira Piven profile former MC5 guitarist and punk pioneer Wayne Kramer in the final segment of *Lifecasters*, chronicling his journey of finding hope and comfort through music. As the teenage leader of the popular 1960s band, The MC5, Kramer is a pioneer in America’s punk rock music scene. Rolling Stone magazine listed him as one of the top 100 guitarists of all time. Kramer believed that the power of music could change the world, but personal issues and drug addictions tore the band apart, and their dream died. After serving a prison sentence for cocaine dealing, Kramer continued to play music and perform, and co-founded Jail Guitar Doors USA as a way to continue to heal his pain and rehabilitate prison inmates by allowing them to communicate in non-violent ways through music.

Through each of the three segments, *Lifecasters* is a model for supporting creative, innovative endeavors, inspiring people around the world to never give up on their dreams.

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CREDITS

Executive Producers: Aron Gaudet, Gita Pullapilly
Producer of Sunny Side Up Films: Kavita Pullapilly
Producer of Bay Area Video Coalition: Carol Varney

Photo: Joshua Z Weinstein



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