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Coming to a theatre near you...

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Coming to a theatre near you . . .

There Matthew Pope was on March 17, in a Las Vegas banquet hall, preparing to be introduced as the winner of the 2005 Coca-Cola Refreshing Filmmaker's Award.

Pope's 50-second "mini-movie," titled "The Line Starts Here," takes a humorous look at a young man's obsession with being first in line to purchase tickets to the premiere of a highly anticipated film. It won the competition's top prize of \$10,000 over entries from nearly 200 other film students.

"I was never one of those guys who camped out for a movie," Pope, a 1999 *magna cum laude* graduate of Furman with a degree in computing-business, told the *Tallahassee Democrat*. "That to me is just something that has always been funny. So I used it."

But as the Florida State University film student awaited his moment in the spotlight — you know, just hanging around backstage with the likes of Matt Damon (one of the contest judges) and other film industry types — he realized he hadn't thought about what to say in his acceptance speech.

A few minutes earlier, he had joked that his film would be seen in 21,000 theatres — but the upcoming "Star Wars" film, "Revenge of the Sith," would be seen in only about 4,500. While Pope's film played, Damon suggested that he use the same line to open his speech.

Which he did. And he got a nice laugh — even from the front-row table of George Lucas, creator of the "Star Wars" series and inspirer of just the type

of people Pope parodied in his movie. "I don't know if Lucas laughed, but I heard laughter coming from his table," Pope told the *Democrat*. "I'm assuming some of the people at his table found it funny."

The panel of judges for Coca-Cola included actor/screenwriter Damon and executives from such major groups as DreamWorks and Blockbuster, Inc. Thanks to their approval, "The Line Starts Here" is currently scheduled to be seen October 21-November 24 as part of the "previews" on 21,000 screens throughout the country.

In theatres that sell Coke, of course. "This is an exciting opportunity for me," says the 28-year-old Pope. "You can work for years in this business without ever seeing a film make it to the screen, much less to thousands."

FSU film school dean Frank Patterson says, "Even an industry giant like Steven Spielberg has yet to see one of his movies open in 21,000 theatres at one time, so this is a remarkable way for Matt to begin his career."

Contest entrants developed their concepts based on the theme of "the movie-going experience." Last fall, 10 finalists were named and given \$7,500 to help them produce their project in 10 weeks.

In Pope's film, the protagonist pitches a tent outside a theatre to ensure that he'll be the first ticket-buyer for a major studio release. But the tent's zipper gets stuck



Matthew Pope's film won the Coca-Cola award over nearly 200 entries.

and he is trapped inside as patrons arrive to purchase tickets. Fortunately, in true Hollywood style, everything works out in the end.

After graduating from Furman, Pope worked as a consultant for about two years before founding Summerset Productions, an independent production company in Atlanta. He enrolled at the Florida State School of Motion Picture, Television and Recording Arts in 2003 and was scheduled to complete his master's degree in August.

First, though, he had to finish and screen his graduate-thesis film, about a 14-year-old boy and his alcoholic mother — a grim tale with little similarity to his light-hearted award-winner.

Once that was done, he and his wife, Laura McBride '01, planned to use their Coca-Cola award earnings to move to Los Angeles, where work in the film industry hopefully awaits.

Bradford Merry Arrington '48, May 21, Killeen, Texas. He taught in Greenville and at the University of North Carolina, the University of Montana at Missoula, Syracuse University and the University of Illinois. In 1956 he became a civilian employee with the U.S. Army, serving until his retirement in 1988 as a supervisory recreation specialist in music and theater. During his career with the Army, he served in Germany, Thailand, Vietnam and the United States. He supervised USO shows in Vietnam. He acted at the Vive Les Arts Theatre in Killeen and appeared in television advertisements and movie productions.

Hugh Thomas Barton '48, May 2, Mukilteo, Wash. Known as "Uncle Doc," he was a U.S. Navy veteran, serving in Guam as a hospital corpsman until his discharge in 1946, after which he attended medical school. He practiced at the Martin Clinic in Pell City, Ala., until 1961, then started the Medical Clinic in Green River, Utah, where he practiced until 1972. He later became the admitting physician at Wyoming State Hospital in Evanston, from which he retired in 1987. In Mukilteo he volunteered for Snohomish County Hospice Care.

Ellen Horton Hicklin '48, March 8, Spartanburg, S.C. She was involved in a number of community organizations

and was a Stephen Minister of the Presbyterian Church.

Dorothy Elizabeth Hitt Jolly, M.A. '48, March 12, Spartanburg, S.C. She taught for 41 years in the Greenville County school system. She was Teacher of the Year in 1969 at Blythe Elementary School, from which she retired in 1975. She was a member of the Woman's Club of Greenville, the Nathanael Greene chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Fidelis Alpha chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa, the National Honorary Society for Women Educators.

Henry Lester Castleberry '49, May 22, Charleston, S.C. He was a retired guidance

counselor at James Island High School and was a volunteer at Roper Hospital and the Veterans Administration Hospital. He was a U.S. Army veteran of World War II.

William Vannoy Woodson, Jr. '49, February 24, Greenville. He was president of Graham Photo Supply and was active in community organizations. He was a veteran of World War II.

William Waller Ford, Sr. '50, April 18, West Columbia, S.C. He retired as engineering manager from Southern Bell after 38 years of employment.

Elizabeth Tillinghast Link '50, June 23, 2004, Sharpley, Del. She retired as a chemist from I.F.I. Plenum Data, was