Toyota to Fund Film with Kentucky Commission on Women

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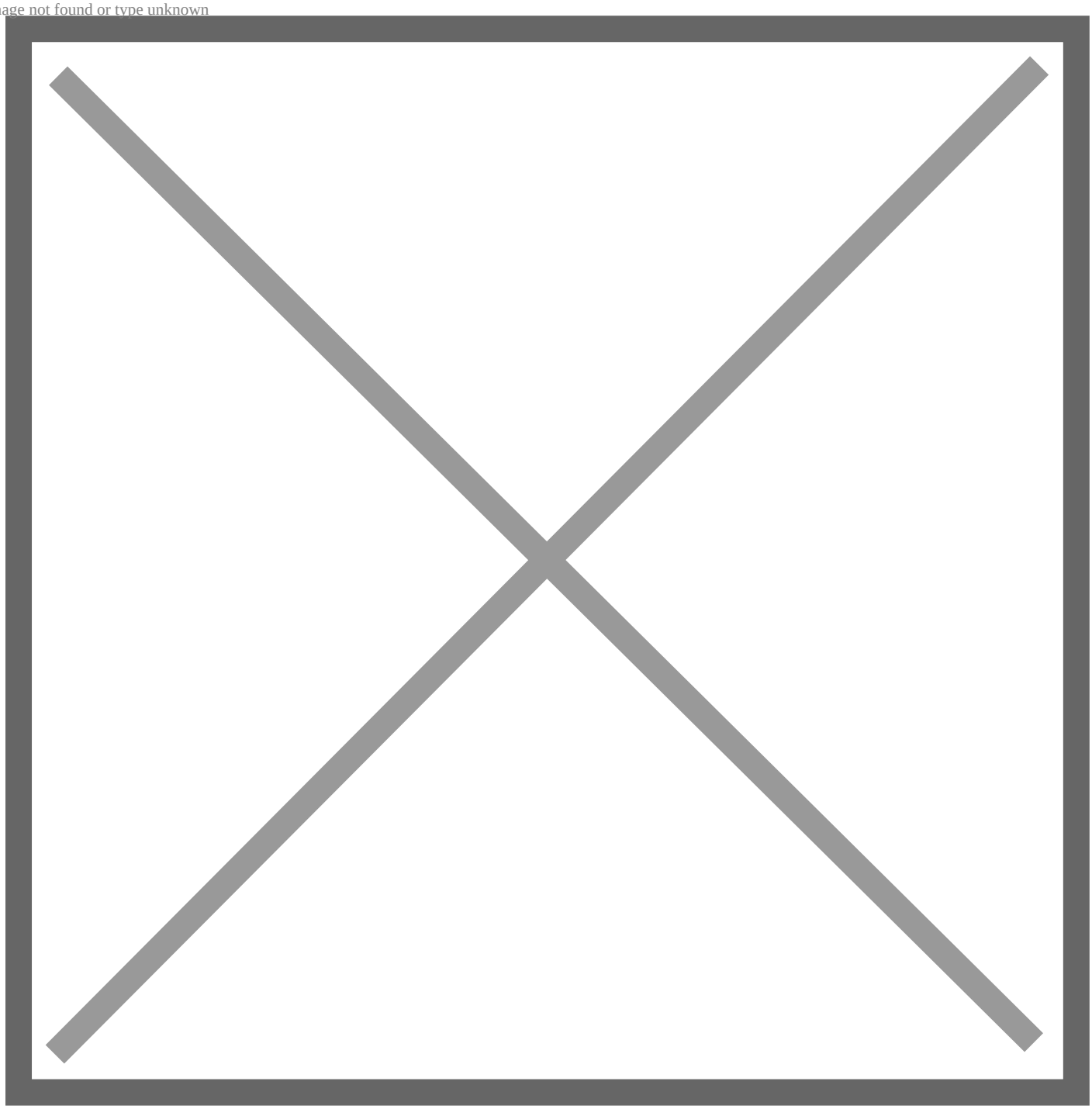

FRANKFORT, Ky. – (March 18, 2014) – Kentucky's place in the history books is often held by men: Abraham Lincoln, Daniel Boone, Henry Clay and Muhammad Ali, to name a few. A new partnership between Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc. and the Kentucky Commission on Women will take aim at this oversight and tell the stories of women who have made great contributions to society and whose impacts continue to affect us today.

At the 50th anniversary celebration for the Kentucky Commission on Women, a group that has consistently sought to protect and enhance the status of women in the Commonwealth, Toyota announced a $100,000 grant that will fund the *Kentucky Women Remembered* film project: a full length documentary that will tell the stories of up to 30 significant female contributors to Kentucky's history. Appalachian author Verna Mae Slone, African-American aviator Willa Beatrice Brown, and the first female Kentucky governor, Martha Layne Collins, are just a few of these women whose stories will be told.

The final product — a 60-minute PBS-style film — will be promoted to target audiences through conferences, screenings and events hosted by the Kentucky Commission on Women, said Eleanor Jordan, executive director. The film is scheduled to be completed by December.

According to Madeline Abramson, Chair of the Commission, the primary motivation for the film project is to enlighten students. "Our goal is to distribute this film on Kentucky's outstanding women to every school system in Kentucky. This valuable information should be included in every history curriculum."

Additionally, the documentary will be accessible through DVD and streaming online media.

Documentarian Michael Breeding, whose most recent project was a film on the Kentucky Governor's Mansion, has been retained to produce this important film for all Kentuckians. Other films produced by Breeding include *The Keeneland Legacy: A Thoroughbred Tradition, Imperial China: The Art of the Horse in Chinese History, and numerous projects for the Kentucky Humanities Council.*

"At Toyota, one of our main tenets is 'respect for people.' And, as part of that, we have a long history of supporting women both in and outside of the workplace," said Wil James, president, Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc. "The accounts of women from Kentucky's history whose creativity, intellect and strength have impacted the Commonwealth should be readily available for all to see. We are honored to be supporting the *Kentucky Women Remembered* film project and its mission to celebrate the past as it empowers our younger women of Kentucky who represent our future leaders and innovators."

Since coming to Kentucky in 1988, Toyota has supported many initiatives that create opportunities and encourage advancement for women in the Commonwealth. Previous efforts include the Women Leading Kentucky Program, which provides business women with professional development programs in their communities; Young Women Lead, which offers learning opportunities for high school students in Northern Kentucky, Lexington, Louisville and Ashland; and the New Opportunity School for Women in Berea, Ky., which helps women in Appalachia focus on completing degrees and preparing for careers.

At the event, Gov. Steve Beshear highlighted the importance of honoring the history of all Kentuckians and how essential it is that all residents of the Commonwealth learn about those who came before them.

"The women whose lives will be memorialized in this production deserve to be held in high regard," Beshear said. "Their contributions to the Commonwealth have been unrecognized for far too long. It is thanks to Toyota's steadfast support of diversity initiatives that we are now telling more than half of the story."

This film is one of the latest initiatives of the Kentucky Commission on Women. Jordan expressed her thanks to Toyota and her excitement that this project will see fruition and her hopes that the finished product will impact

the lives of those who watch.

“This documentary project is long overdue and necessary for the next generation to learn of the largely unrecognized achievements by women who have shaped our history,” Jordan said. “Thanks to the generosity of Toyota, we are well on our way to making this historical content relevant, accessible and exciting.”