


CALENDAR

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CRITIC'S
NOTEBOOK

MOVIE REVIEWS



"One of the most powerful documentaries I've ever seen...
I cannot recommend something more" - Zach Braff

HEART OF STONE
A FILM BY BETH TONI KRUVANT

"Heartfelt...a fine tuned cut" - Robert Koehler, *Variety*
"a penetrating documentary" - Leba Hertz, *San Francisco Chronicle*

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER heartofstonethemovie.com

LAEMMLE'S TOWN CENTER IN ENCINO
AUGUST 14-20

GOOD
FOOTAGE

A principal's class
act in New Jersey

The title of Beth Toni Krivant's probing documentary "Heart of Stone" refers to Ronald Stone, the remarkable principal of Newark's Weequahic High School, whose heart is anything but. A rugged 6-foot-3-inch athlete, Stone in 2001 arrived at a school that had once been rated as among the best in the nation but had become one of the worst schools in the 12th most dangerous U.S. city.

"Heart of Stone" is a portrait of a dedicated man — smart, articulate, strong and tough-minded yet warm and compassionate, willing and able to reach out and communicate with his students on an individual basis. It is also the story of the city. Between 1930 and 1960, the Weequahic neighborhood was an idyllic, secure, solidly middle-class Jewish neighborhood, but shifting demographics and brewing racial tensions, which exploded in a landmark 1967 riot, drove



Good Footage Productions

TOP GRADES: "Heart of Stone" examines the effect that one good principal has on a New Jersey High School.

Newark's whites to the suburbs, and Weequahic became a black neighborhood increasingly terrorized by gang warfare. The film also calls attention to the school's formidable alumni association co-founded

by Hal Braff, class of 1952 — and the father of the film's executive producer, actor Zach Braff.

The group, composed of both older Jews and younger blacks, has been key in sup-

porting Stone's effort to transform Weequahic, raising impressive sums for college scholarships, supporting the football team and providing skiing outings for students — even a trip to Paris. Deftly structured, incisive and revealing, uplifting without ever glossing over grim realities, "Heart of Stone" offers a hard-won sense of hope and possibilities.

— KEVIN THOMAS

"Heart of Stone." MPAA rating: Unrated. Running time: 1 hour, 24 minutes. At the Town Center 5 in Encino through Thursday.