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For Immediate Release:

PIONEERING NEW FILM ON WORKING WOMEN

From time to time a film appears that captures the spirit of a new movement stirring in towns and cities across America.

THE WILLMAR 8 is such a film. It tells the inspiring story of eight women--bank workers in the small town of Willmar, Minnesota--who suddenly found themselves in the forefront of the fight for working women's rights.

Like millions of other women throughout the country, they had been relegated to low-wage, dead-end jobs. When a young male trainee was hired at almost twice their starting salary, and the women were required to "train him in," they complained to the bank president. He told them, "We're not all equal, you know."

That comment led eight unassuming and apolitical women to tak the most unexpected step of their lives. They formed a union and started the first bank strike in the history of Minnesota.

The women picketed the bank through two brutal Minnesota winters where the wind-chill factor reaches 70 below. They were forged into a tight, self-reliant group and discovered the strength of their own inner-resources.

But as the months passed, the women were isolated in their own community, exhausted and out of money. Time and an adverse National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruling combined to break the strike.

Nevertheless, through their struggle, the Willmar 8 won a sense of dignity and self-worth that had been denied them on the job. And, for the first time, the community as a whole was challenged to confront the issue of women's rights.

THE WILLMAR 8 is an inspiring film about the growing drive of women for equality and fulfillment in their lives and in their work. At the same time it underlines the importance of

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the E.R.A., labor law reform and union organizing in the continuing fight for economic justice. Above all, the WILLMAR 8 shows that ordinary women in ordinary towns are capable of changing their lives and finding in themselves the extraordinary resources that such a struggle requires.

edited by Suzanne Petit

THE WILLMAR 8 was directed by actress/director Lee Grant and produced by Mary Beth Yarrow and Julie Thompson. It is available from California Newsreel, 630 Natoma Street, San Francisco, CA 94103. (415) 621-6196. The film is 55 minutes in length and rents for \$75. Those unable to afford this fee may request a discount, The sale price is \$700.

What they are saying about THE WILLMAR 8:

"There can be no better film than THE WILLMAR 8 to show skeptics what the women's struggle is all about or to show women that the struggle is worth it."

Gloria Steinem

"THE WILLMAR 8 is a small gem which will be an important organizing tool for the growing movement of working women. If it's happening in Willmar, it is happening in America."

Karen Nussbaum, Director
Working Women

"...a teaching tool for church women and men who are seeking ways to create more just and human communities in towns all across the U.S."

Paul Sherry, Director
Pilgrim Press

"Finally a film which portrays the crying need of working women to be organized as well as the strength, courage and perseverance that we women can bring to our unions."

Joyce D. Miller, President
Coalition of Labor Union Women

"An inspiration...each person, no matter how poor, humble or unassuming can better his or her life."

Marge Tobankin, Director
VISTA

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