

**FERRODONNA FEATURES**

**PRESENTS**

**TO A MORE PERFECT UNION: U.S. V. WINDSOR**

A film by Donna Zaccaro

62:52 run time

**PRESS NOTES**

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**SYNOPSIS**

*To A More Perfect Union: U.S. v Windsor* is a feature-length documentary that tells a story of love, marriage, and a fight for equality. The film chronicles unlikely heroes -- octogenarian Edie Windsor and her attorney, Roberta Kaplan, on their quest for justice. Upon the death of her spouse, Edie was forced to pay a huge estate tax bill because the government denied federal benefits to same-sex couples-- and Edie's spouse, Thea Spyer, was a woman. Deeply offended by this lack of recognition of her more than forty-year relationship with the love of her life, Edie decided to sue the United States government -- and won. Windsor and Kaplan's legal and personal journeys are told in their own words as well as through interviews with members of their legal team, movement activists, legal analysts, well-known supporters, and their opponents. Beyond the story of this pivotal case in the marriage equality movement, the film also tells the story of our journey as a people, as a culture, and as citizens with the promise of equal rights.

**Film Structure**

The stories in the film are presented in a non-linear fashion, with the personal woven into the legal, cultural and historic. That said, the film builds in dramatic tension to the climatic Supreme Court argument and consequent decision. The film self-narrates through extensive interviews conducted for the film, archival news and cultural footage, as well as personal

footage from and of the subjects. Throughout, many personal and professional photos, court drawings, and graphics are included.

### **Participants/Featuring**

Lillian Faderman, Historian and Author  
Roberta Kaplan, Windsor Attorney  
Pam Karlan, Windsor Legal Team & Co-Director, Stanford Supreme Court Litigation Clinic  
Rachel Lavine, Roberta's spouse  
Rosie O'Donnell, Comedian, Actor, Activist  
Frank Rich, Writer-At-Large, NY Magazine  
Hilary Rosen, Communications Advisor & LGBT Activist  
Richard Socarides, White House Special Assistant & Advisor to President Clinton  
Matt Staver, Founder & Chairman, Liberty Counsel  
Jeff Toobin, CNN Legal Analyst & New Yorker Staff Writer  
Nina Totenberg, Legal Affairs Correspondent, National Public Radio  
Tony West, Former Associate U.S. Attorney General  
Edie Windsor, Plaintiff  
Evan Wolfson, Founder & President, Freedom to Marry

## **ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS**

### **DONNA ZACCARO (DIRECTOR & PRODUCER)**

*To A More Perfect Union: US v. Windsor* Director and Producer Donna Zaccaro is the founder and President of Dazzling Media and Ferrodonna Features Inc. Both are New York-based media production companies – one for profit and the other nonprofit, with a mission of producing films about women, women's issues, and social justice issues. Previously, Donna served as the Director and Producer of *Geraldine Ferraro: Paving the Way*, a critically-acclaimed documentary about the trailblazer who made history as the first woman to run for national office on a major party ticket. Prior to founding her media production companies, Donna was a longtime, award-winning producer for the "Today" show at NBC News. She has also worked in other industries including politics, public affairs, marketing and communications, and began her career in investment banking.

Donna holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Brown University and an MBA in General Business Administration from Harvard Business School.

### **PAULA HEREDIA: (EDITOR & PRODUCER)**

Paula Heredia is a Salvadoran award-winning documentary producer, director, and editor,

who has been honored by the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences with an *Emmy*® for her work in the acclaimed HBO documentary *In Memoriam, NYC 9/11/01*. She has also been the recipient of the prestigious *American Cinema Editors-ACE Eddie Award*® for the acclaimed documentary *Unzipped*, and the *Hispanic Creative Award* for her director's work in *Teniendo Un Bebe*. She received her second *ACE Eddie Award*® nomination for the HBO series *The Weight of the Nation*. For her documentary *Africa Rising*, Paula received the *Best Woman Director Award* at the International Documentary Film Festival in Soria and at the Festival of Cine Invisible in Bilbao, Spain. Her most recent film *Alborada* premiere at the Habana Film Festival in Cuba, and this year for her film *Toucan Nation* Paula received the Humane Society's *Genesis Award* for "creating outstanding works that raise awareness of animal protection issues.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Shortly after the Supreme Court's landmark Windsor decision, I had the opportunity to hear the plaintiff, Edie Windsor, and her lawyer, Roberta Kaplan, speak about it. I found the duo incredibly articulate, compelling, smart and attractive, and found the story of their case to be unexpected, heroic and important. I loved the fact that they were women of two different generations who banded together to fight for what they believed in and in doing so, changed our country for the better. I saw immediately that the personal stories of both Edie and Robbie told the bigger story of the history of gay rights in this country and even more broadly, the latest chapter of the civil rights movement. I was also interested in telling their stories because I believe there is a paucity of films about women and women leaders, and because I felt that the case itself was not getting the attention that it deserved as the pivotal case in the marriage equality movement. Finally, I believe that the story of the case itself takes on even greater importance now as hard-fought rights are being revisited and challenged in today's political environment – and sadly, as Edie Windsor has passed away.

## PRINCIPAL CREDITS

DIRECTED BY **DONNA ZACCARO**

PRODUCED BY **DONNA ZACCARO AND PAULA HEREDIA**

EDITED BY **PAULA HEREDIA**

MUSIC: **WENDY BLACKSTONE**

CAMERA: **JIM SICILE**

SOUND: **KEVIN TRAINOR**

WORLDWIDE SALES: **STEVEN C. BEER**

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FILM WEBSITE: [www.perfectunionfilm.com](http://www.perfectunionfilm.com)

OPEN/PREVIEW: <https://vimeo.com/199395977>

**AWARDS:**

2018 Manhattan Film Festival: Best Feature Documentary

2018 Accolade Global Film: Humanitarian Award

2018 Impact Docs Awards: Award of Excellence Feature Documentary

2017 Accolade Global Film Competition: Award of Excellence for Documentary Feature

2017 Accolade Global Film Competition: Award of Excellence for Women Filmmakers

**PRESS**

<https://shuffleonline.net/2018/06/05/to-a-more-perfect-union-u-s-v-windsor-review/>

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/la-et-mn-capsule-more-perfect-union-doc-review-20180606-story.html>

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/amp/review/a-more-perfect-union-us-v-windsor-1117831>

<https://www.austinchronicle.com/events/film/2018-06-13/to-a-more-perfect-union-u-s-v-windsor/>

<https://www.wnyc.org/story/supreme-court-case-changed-gay-marriage-laws/>

<http://gaycitynews.nyc/edie-windsors-victory-much-barely-hour/>

<https://newyorkmakers.com/blogs/magazine/donna-zaccaro-a-strong-woman-state-of-mind>

