

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Fire Ruin Renewal: a short film commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the
firestorm of 1991**

The story of an historic house and the battle to save it from complete destruction.

Berkeley / Oakland, Calif. (October 2011) -- Margaretta K. Mitchell, author and photographer, has created a visual documentary of the firestorm disaster, its aftermath and recovery as a commemoration of the 20th anniversary. Through stunning fire footage and compelling still images of the devastated house-made-ruin, she draws us into the disaster and the renewal through fascinating images of the restoration. Woven throughout is the music of composer John Adams. What was a sad, consuming and difficult process ultimately became creative and fulfilling. This production is unique; it stands alone among the stories of the firestorm of 1991.

“Our world changed in a few hours. Disasters do not last for only one day in the lives of survivors. Everything looks different after that day. In fact everything is different and we are changed...”

Screenings:

Oakland Heritage Alliance • Thursday, October 13, 7:30PM

Location: Chapel of the Chimes 4499 Piedmont Ave., Oakland, CA

Admission: \$10 OHA members, \$15 for the general public

Details online: <http://www.oaklandheritage.org/Events.html>

KTOP features the film on its commemoration of the firestorm and will be shown throughout the month on Comcast Cable Channel 10 and AT&T U-verse. KTOP is the City of Oakland's government channel and reaches about 300,000 homes via cable tv and streamed throughout the world via the internet at:

<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/CityAdministration/d/KTOP/index.htm>

Fire Ruin Renewal will premiere **Friday October 14th at 7:30 pm**

Mrs Dalloway's Bookstore • Wednesday, October 19, 7:30 PM

Location: 2904 College Ave., Berkeley, CA

Tax-deductible donations to The Institute for Historical Study will be appreciated, and we will supply forms at the screening.

Details online: <http://www.mrsdalloways.com/events/margaretta-mitchell>

American Institute of Architects will screen the film at their fall members' meeting later in October

Oakland Museum of California • Friday October 14th at 7PM

And Sunday afternoons at 2PM from now until February 2012 in the Hollywood Theater.

The film will also be shown as part of a symposium in late January. TBA

For high-resolution images, contact Margaretta Mitchell (510-652-8609)

“October 20th 1991 — Sunday morning — blue sky and dry air suddenly turned to burning orange light, hot sun overhead broken by waves of furious, swirling hot winds loaded with flames. By late afternoon terrifying images of Fire burned into the memories of those who live in Northern California.

I Labeled a major wild land/ urban/ interface fire, the worst fire in California history, in fact, the most destructive in American history at the time; the 1991 firestorm brought 3400 dwellings to the ground, killed 25 people, injured 150 others, charred 1600 acres and caused 1.5 billion dollars in damage.

I hope that this documentary will serve to bear witness to disaster and survival. I hope that by telling my story, others will be inspired to share their experiences of the 20th of October 1991.”
*—quotes from **Fire Ruin Renewal**© Margaretta K. Mitchell 2011*

Thank you... This project would not have been realized without the expertise and assistance of many individuals and organizations. They are listed in the booklet accompanying the DVD.

Donations... We are still requesting donations to help cover the production costs. Please make checks payable to **The Institute for Historical Study** and mail to: 280 Hillcrest Road, Berkeley CA 94705. You will receive a confirmation of your tax-deductible donation by mail.

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