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It is appropriate that *Take One's* first issue of the new millennium should be, in a way, a tribute to the National Film Board, which turned 60 last year. Undoubtedly, without the Film Board, there would not have been a Canadian film culture, or if there was, it would be in a radically different form than it is today. The NFB, for better or worse, virtually defines the very nature of Canadian cinema. Its stern, doctrinaire commitment to the documentary form and its excellence in animation are generally perceived to be the heart and soul of Canadian filmmaking. Board founder John Grierson's personal dislike, or more accurately, his mistrust of dramatic features to convey the human condition, chartered the course of Canadian filmmaking for a generation or more.

Yet for all its accomplishments and laurels (nominated for 63 Oscars, winning 10 and literally thousands of other awards worldwide over a sustained period of 60 years), the Board has come under increasing criticism from the right-wing press and careless politicians who understand nothing of the Board's stellar history and importance in the fabric of Canadian cinema. And it might be that the Film Board is an idea whose time has come and gone. Public funding for the arts right across the board has come under increased scrutiny, and the idea of a publicly funded Film Board, as much as a publicly funded broadcasting network, is perhaps no longer sustainable in a world of global communications, bottom-line economics and ruthless capitalism. In this issue of *Take One*, we asked Peter Wintonick, the director of *Cinéma Vérité*—a film that recounts the huge contribution the Board made to direct cinema—and Colin Low, the Film Board veteran responsible for some of its most memorable films, to speak to the importance and future of the National Film Board.

To matters closer to the heart, Gerald Pratley's tribute to Pat Thompson in the previous issue was moving and very personal. Because she was so widely known and loved, Pat's tragic death did not go unnoticed. However, as editor I should have noticed that Gerald did not mention Thompson's "Short Takes" column for *Cinema Canada*, as my former editor was kind enough to point out to me in a letter. It was an oversight that I am happy to make up for now.

**To the Editor:** Reading Gerald Pratley as he remembered the life of Pat Thompson brought back many memories of both of them: as stalwarts at the outset of the current Canadian film era. In that tribute, it seemed unfair to Pat to skip over the many long years during which she was the voice of short-film reviews for *Cinema Canada*. Pat simply loved short films. She sought them out. If you were a filmmaker you could send her an invitation, a can of film, or a video; she would come to your house, or the theatre or festival to give your short film her full attention. She was quick, concise and generous in her reviews. She knew that films were often launching pads for major talent. It would be interesting today to count how many filmmakers got their first media attention in one of her short-film reviews. As the magazine weathered good times and more difficult ones, Pat was constant in her defence of the short film. When lean months would have prompted any sensible editor to cut back on the number of printed pages, she stood in the way, defying us to eliminate her column. She was Pat, seven-feet tall, and she got her way. Long reviews gave way to capsules, and still Pat continued to prospect for new shorts. She was magnificent in her devotion to the form, to the filmmakers, and to the project which was *Cinema Canada*.

Yours, Connie John  
formerly editor of *Cinema Canada*.

W. P. Wise