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Former United States Surgeon General Dr. Richard Carmona Joins Paramedic Documentary as Co-Producer with "Emergency!" Stars Randy Mantooth and Kevin Tighe

LOS ANGELES—Richard Carmona, MD, the nation's 17th Surgeon General and a former military medic, has joined the team producing the documentary "Into the Unknown: The Paramedics' Journey." The film, scheduled to debut this spring, will tell the real-life stories of today's paramedic.

"Kevin and I are so pleased to have Dr. Carmona's participation," said Randy Mantooth. "His reputation and rich range of experience is unmatched. Now we get to work side-by-side with this ardent and articulate advocate for paramedics."

Dream comes true for "Emergency!" stars

The ground-breaking and influential TV show "Emergency!" celebrated its 50th anniversary last August in Los Angeles. Mantooth, Kevin Tighe and others associated with the show were hosted by Steve Martin, a retired Los Angeles County Assistant Fire Chief and a member of the documentary's executive team. One of the highlights of the night was an exclusive preview trailer for the documentary.

"The TV show was so successful in promoting the idea of paramedics because of its documentary style of storytelling," Mantooth told Martin. "This new documentary will tell the story of the modern paramedic, including the stress and hardships of the job. Kevin and I have been talking about this for decades. It's a dream come true."

Dr. Carmona's storied career

Richard, the oldest son of emigrant parents, was born and raised in the Harlem section of New York City. He dropped out of high school and enlisted in the U.S. Army where he obtained his GED high school diploma. He went on to become a combat decorated U. S. Army Special Forces medic.

After Vietnam he worked as a civilian medic, ER/critical care nurse, prehospital instructor and EMS coordinator while attending college. He then went on to medical school where he graduated as the top graduate, became a trauma surgeon and critical care physician, distinguished professor and EMS director.

“For more than 50 years Dr. Carmona has inspired EMS professionals,” said Dr. Baxter Larmon, founding director of the UCLA Center for Prehospital Care and a member of the documentary’s executive team. “He is a mentor to me—I’m humbled to have someone of his stature on our team.“

Telling the story of the modern paramedic

The new documentary is directed by award-winner Tom Putnam. Following a pandemic that strained our healthcare system and revealed the critical role that paramedics play in caring for their communities, it will realistically depict the lives and jobs of half a dozen paramedic crews around the nation.

"As a fellow first responder for well over half a century, I am thrilled and honored to join the ITU team,” said Dr. Carmona. “I look forward to helping advance our mission to tell the story of the essential role of paramedics in our society.”

Filming of Into the Unknown is complete, with EMS agencies from throughout the U.S. represented:

- Baton Rouge, LA: East Baton Rouge Parish EMS
- Denver, CO: Denver Health Paramedics
- Crozet VA: Western Albemarie Rescue Squad
- Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara County Fire Department
- Sparks, NV: City of Sparks Fire Department
- Medford, OR: Chiron Ranch, Front Line Resilience

In addition to Martin and Dr. Larmon, the executive team includes producer Tonya Mantooth, sister to Randy Mantooth and a ten-time Regional Emmy award winner. FirstNet®, Built with AT&T*, is the principal sponsor of the project. Additional sponsors supporting the documentary’s production include Masimo, ZOLL Medical Corporation and Public Safety Group.

Find out more about the documentary, the advisory committee and the organizations supporting it at intotheunknowndoc.com. You can also sign up to get regular updates on the progress of the documentary and “behind-the-scenes” stories and footage.

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About the “Into the Unknown” Production Company

ITU Doc LLC is dedicated to telling the stories of today’s paramedics through documentary film. It has an advisory board made up of 17 key industry leaders and has been endorsed by 19 major national EMS organizations, representing almost 2 million members nationwide. Learn more about the project at intotheunknowndoc.com.