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AZ Insider: Movie Premiere in Phoenix

Written by Kathy Shayna Shocket



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"The AZ Insider" with Kathy Shayna Shocket: Get the inside scoop on Arizona's social scene and [celebrity news](#).



This week: Check out the movers and shakers on the red carpet and more.

Some of the stars of a new [movie](#) turned out for its premiere in the heart of downtown Phoenix. The magnificent beacon light of the Orpheum Theatre's octagonal tower against the picturesque Arizona sky was the perfect setting for this film (see photo above of the Orpheum [Theatre](#) in downtown Phoenix). And the illuminated marquee hailed the debut of "Arizona's Great Economic Transformation."

Perhaps **Orpheus** himself (the Greek hero venerated as the greatest of all poets and [musicians](#)) and the late **Barry Goldwater** were there in spirit, amidst the crowd of the state's business and political VIPs. Yes, the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC) rolled out the red carpet for the debut of its movie about an era that shaped Arizona's economic future.

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The Orpheum Theatre, built in 1929 with its old elegance architecture is a cinematic treasure. So, coupled with the movie's historical theme, the event had a sort of old Hollywood type ambiance. Especially when the cameras were flashing, and guests crowded around those taking pictures of some of the stars in the film. At first glance, the distinguished tall man with striking white hair and glasses seemed as if he could be Cary Grant's brother or son. (Cary had striking white hair and wore signature black framed glasses.) However, the man with white Cary Grant type framed glasses was Robert Fannin.



Arizona House Speaker Kirk Adams and Ambassador Robert Fannin

Bob, who is better known these days as Ambassador Fannin (he was the Ambassador to the Dominican Republic appointed by **George Bush**) and the former head of Arizona's Republican Party has not only been a part of Arizona's history, but his late father was Arizona Governor **Paul Fannin** from 1959 to 1965 and subsequently a U.S. Senator.



William Pepicello, president of the University of Phoenix

The invitation only debut event included state and local policymakers, GPEC board members and prominent business and community figures in Arizona's past and present. One of those influential business and community leaders was **Sharon Harper**, president of the Plaza Companies.



Sun Health Properties' Joseph La Rue, Sharon Harper, CEO and President of the Plaza Companies, Dr. Oliver Harper of Banner Arizona Medical Clinic and Bradley Wright of University of Phoenix

Sharon was enthusiastic about the [documentary film](#) as a vehicle to educate others of the history of the how the state's major industries came to Arizona and ultimately shaped the future of Arizona's economy. And she applauds GPEC's efforts to produce the project.

"As a Founder and Board Member of GPEC for 20 years, I have observed phenomenal leadership from this organization. They have garnered the respect of municipalities and are highly regarded throughout the state," she told me.



Ambassador Robert Fannin, Dr. Lisa Fannin, Paul Fannin, and Colleen Fannin

Those featured in the film also include **Jack August, Jr.**, **Don Beckerleg**, **Jay Smith**, **Marshall Trimble** and **George Weisz**. The 30-minute documentary was produced by GPEC and ISynergy and sponsored by SCF Arizona. **William Pepicello**, chairman of the GPEC board and president of University of Phoenix, welcomed guests and spoke about the historical importance of the film.

The film details the history of the aerospace and electronics companies in Arizona such as Motorola. Many Arizonans believe the state's major industries originally came to Arizona because of its warm climate and inviting lifestyle. And the film also highlights the importance of the years following World War II when Arizona leaders worked together and paid close attention to national and international events, transforming the difficult economy into opportunity for Arizona.



Ted Simons pictured at right when he moderated the TV debate for the 2010 Arizona gubernatorial election

By the way, **Ted Simons**, host and managing editor of PBS's Horizon show couldn't make it to the premiere; however, I really like what he said after he saw the film. "A celebration of the past and a sobering reminder that standing still is not an option for the future."



Kathy Shayna Shocket is a Phoenix based writer. If you have a good item for The AZ Insider, you can email her at redcarpetgirl@aol.com.

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