

ANN ARBOR: Film on men aging features Bo Schembechler's cardiologist

By Amy Bell



Dr. Kim Eagle, Bo Schembechler's cardiologist, on the set of "The Embrace of Aging." Photo credit Embrace of Aging.

A Novi-based filmmaker has taken on the task of showing men the process of aging and how to embrace it.

According to the U.S. Census, 17.3 percent of the U.S. population is older than age 65. However, those numbers are expected to increase drastically with the baby boomer generation, which is comprised of 78.2 million Americans, the first turning 65 in 2012.

"Never before in our history is there going to be such a large number of people stepping into their senior years," said 10-time Emmy winning director Keith Famie, who directed "The Embrace of Aging: The Male Perspective of Growing Old." The movie is part of a three-part

series that will also feature a documentary about women and the aging process as well as a film about dying.

"The Embrace of Aging: The Male Perspective of Growing Old" explores ways for men to embrace aging and the need for them to eat good, heart-healthy foods, exercise, building connections and friendships.

The documentary, which is based in Michigan, consists of nearly two years of filming, which took Famie and his crew all throughout the United States and even to the mountains of Sardinia, Italy an area known for having the longest-lived men in the world.

"The goal was to create a documentary that engages audience by way of both medical, scientific, clinical and rich human interest stories of men going through aging process," Famie said.

"It's not manly to ignore your health, it's ridiculous," said Dr. Kim Eagle, University of Michigan cardiologist who is featured in the film. Eagle is known throughout Ann Arbor for having treated UM football-coaching legend, Bo Schembechler. Schembechler had his first heart attack at age 39 but found ways to have a healthy and active life for nearly 40 years after that.

Eagle and Schembechler worked together on the "The Heart of a Champion" a book that details Schembechler's battle with heart disease and other medical conditions. The two worked together on the main part of the book but Eagle wrote the last few chapters after Schembechler died in 2006 at age 77.

In the film, Eagle, who is the director of the Cardiovascular Center at UMHS, talks about what happens to the cardiovascular system as people age and ways that patients and families can take action during their lifetime to maximize their longevity and quality of life as they get older. He also talks about his own personal diagnosis of mild coronary disease.

"I think Keith is a remarkable filmmaker, he captures in a very human way a lot of different scenes in the lives of men that will resonate to an audience," Eagle said. "We don't talk enough about what happens when we age, how do we deal with it, how do we make the most of it, I really like this film because it takes that on head first."

Famie has been directing documentary films for a number of years and spent a lot of time with the older population. It was a natural progression for him to film a documentary series about the aging process, he said.

During the casting process, Famie knew he wanted to interview a well-known, highly respected cardiologist. When he found Eagle, he knew he had the right match because Eagle was well respected, was really good on camera, was Schembechler's former cardiologist and was also dealing with heart disease.

"Here's a guy who not only talks the talk, he walks the walk," Famie said. "He has adapted his own lifestyle for his own personal scenario."

The documentary will premiere at 6 p.m. Feb 24 in Southfield at the Shriners Silver Garden events center.

To purchase tickets for the premiere or for more information about the series visit <http://embraceofaging.com>. For more information about tickets to the premiere, contact 248-869-0096. Tickets are \$75 per person. Proceeds will go to the Heart of a Champion Research Fund at U of M, created in honor of Schembechler, and the Alzheimer's Association.

http://www.heritage.com/articles/2013/02/14/ann_arbor_journal/news/doc511c1383222c5070053188.txt?viewmode=fullstory