

Batman and "The Dark Knight" Movie Producer Michael Uslan Returns to hometown of Ocean Township, NJ

By Currents Magazine LLC

Dated: Jun 19, 2008

With the imminent release of "The Dark Knight", Executive Producer of the Batman movies, Catwomen, and National Treasure returns home to Monmouth County NJ where the journey all began.

It's the 60's, and you just chased an eight-year-old boy out of your pharmacy for hanging around. He'd spent half the day, pestering you "When are gonna open that stack of magazines...the ones with the comics in them." The rest of the time he was crouched at the rack, devouring each new animated adventure. Just another kid, right?

But not all little boys are alike. Every now and then there's that one who gets an idea and won't let go. Every now and then there's a Michael Uslan. Eight-year-old Michael Uslan knew someday he was going to bring his favorite superhero to life. He would share his beloved Batman's adventures, his integrity and dedication with an eager audience, just waiting to be whisked into a brand new world.

But, like Batman, not all superheroes happen overnight. They set off, like Ulysses, on a life journey that tests their commitment and redefines their skills. "I loved Batman because he had no superpowers, which I felt was really the coolest thing of all, and he had the greatest super-villains 'cause you gotta have a challenge. I always thought that if I studied and worked out real hard and if my dad bought me a cool car, I can do what this guy does."

And now, as the Executive Producer of the Batman movies, he has. Even though Batman is a household name, Michael never forgets his journey that started right here in Ocean Township, NJ. Michael Uslan is a remarkable man, a portrait of determination and largely still a little kid who can't wait to share his stories. Despite all his accomplishments, he and his family still live in New Jersey, because that's where you learn to be a grounded person. His family and friends are quick to tell you how Michael never gave up. His teachers beam.

We spent the day with Michael Uslan his way, journeying through Wannamassa School, Dow Avenue School and Ocean Township High School. We visited the very same pharmacy where he spent a whole thirty cents to buy three carefully chosen comics and visited Temple Beth Torah, where his family were founding members. Every step of the way, Michael had another story. He pulled up classmates names like a google search, tapped his foot on places in playgrounds where he'd hit a home run or waited for a bus, told us how he'd poured hours into crafting cleverly produced school PA announcements and spoke of his accomplishments in Hollywood not with star soaked sagas, but with lessons of tenacity and resilience. "Anyone can be Batman, if you put your mind to it."

Born in Bayonne, the family moved to the shore cause there was plenty of work for his father, a mason contractor. Soon Michael figured out his love of comics was going to take some romancing, so he and his friends would commute into New York City to take the weekly tour of the DC Comics offices. It was there, he would meet Sol Harrison, the future president of DC Comics, who would play a pivotal role in Uslan fulfilling many lifelong dreams.

Michael was at Indiana University, teaching the world's first accredited college course on comics while still an undergrad, when he got the call from his soon-to-be mentor and friend, Sol Harrison. As a result of

all the worldwide publicity generated by his comic book course, Harrison offered him a job at DC Comics which would soon lead him to his dream assignment, to write a Batman comic book. In a flash Michael had that moment, that 50/50 combination of I've done it and now what next. "I said, 'I want to produce a definitive Batman movie.' A dark serious movie, just the way Bob Kane and Bill Finger created him in 1939. A creature of the night, stalking criminals from the shadows. That then became my goal in life. Sol Harrison told me that 'Batman is as dead as a dodo since he left the television airwaves,' but if I wanted to pursue it, I would need the proper credentials. Not coming from wealth, not having any relatives in the movie biz, not knowing a soul in Hollywood, I went to law school and spent years learning about every aspect of how to finance and produce films. I worked at United Artists, the only movie studio based in New York at the time. I trusted Sol completely and I knew that if there was any activity, he would let me know. It's important everyone know Sol's name and how integral he was to this whole Batman movie thing getting started, he deserves this credit."

Long time friend and celebrity publicist Nan Leonard remembers. "Michael Uslan and I worked at United Artists in the 70's, where he would put out a million legal fires a day. After commuting back to New Jersey, most people would sit and watch TV....but not Michael, he continued working into the night by writing Dick Clark's First 25 Years of Rock & Roll. Michael said, 'one day, I am going to make a movie about the dark side of Batman.' It took nearly 18 years of being turned down by every studio, but he finally brought it to the silver screen in 1989's revolutionary first BATMAN and, of course, 2005's BATMAN BEGINS, was the summer blockbuster! I still marvel at Michael's intelligence, creativity and passion, and with all his success, his beautiful wife, Nancy and his children, he is as gracious a human being as he is a talented and highly respected member of the entertainment community. Here's a man who received the President's Medal for Excellence in 2006 and the President's Circle Award in 2002, he is listed in Who's Who in Entertainment and Who's Who in the World, he's got an Emmy Award and countless others. He has long standing relationships with famous celebrities and the heads of studios. But when you talk with Michael Uslan, he's still just this great guy who grew up "down the shore", who loves talking about his days in Asbury Park, who has fond memories of hanging out at local comic book shops and the beach. With all his success...Michael is a true Jersey boy who is living his dreams."

Uslan credits much of his success to his mother, Lillian, who taught him the value of commitment. "She did everything she could with the little she had to make my brother, Paul and I excited about learning and taught us to stick to whatever we set our minds to. At the end of each school year, she would find out what we would be studying the next school year in Social Studies and would plan trips so we could see the actual locations of history and better relate to them when we covered the subjects in class. My father was a mason. His buildings are all over the area, and he taught us that jobs well done, like brick buildings, have longevity and legacy. Value the work you are doing and others will to."

Michael tells us what he has told countless students. "Life is about rejection. That's going to happen. It's how you learn to handle it that makes the difference. You have to learn to go back, again and again and again, knocking on doors till your knuckles bleed. You must have a Plan B... and a Plan C... and a D and E wouldn't hurt." He also says that following your bliss may not always mean superstardom, but it can mean supersatisfaction. "Do what you love everyday and enjoy where you are at with it everyday. You don't have to have a hit record to be a songwriter, or be a published author to be a writer. I LOVE what I do. I cannot wait till it's time to go back to work. To me, I feel like I get to play in a sandbox each day with my favorite toys."

When you think about it, that little eight-year-old boy's vision birthed in a little pink Cape Cod house on Raymere Avenue... just a short bike ride away from the comic book heaven known then as Wanamassa Pharmacy on Wickapecko Avenue... has created another dimension, a separate celluloid universe with Batman... joined by Superman, Spider-Man, Iron Man, the X-Men, the Fantastic 4, and so many others...a

world we can now safely navigate and explore.

View photos of his visit home at <http://www.currentsnj.com>

View The Dark Knight Trailer at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8PPh-C9pRU>

###

For 11 years, Currents has helped small local businesses develop into big businesses with advertising that will work in even the slowest economy. Does your Monmouth or Ocean County business need marketing through Direct Point-of-Purchase Email, High Quality Advertising, Websites, and Print Material? How about a full distribution reaching 100,000 upscale homes in Monmouth and Ocean County? Then you need a partner - Currents Magazine.

Category	Entertainment, Movies
Tags	batman, batman begins, the dark knight, movie, michael uslan, ocean, monmouth, nj, new jersey, release, superhero
Email	Click to contact author
Phone	732-460-0606
Fax	732-460-0602
Address	149 Avenue at the Commons Suite 204
City/Town	Red Bank
State/Province	New Jersey
Zip	07702
Country	United States
Link	http://prlog.org/10081950



Scan this QR Code with your SmartPhone to-

- * Read this news online
- * Contact author
- * Bookmark or share online