

# Media Release

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 23, 2015

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### **New Film on Will Rogers Memorial Hospital to Premiere October 10**

**September 23, 2015, Saranac Lake, NY** -- Historic Saranac Lake announced the release of a new film titled "Hotel Hope" about the history of Will Rogers Memorial Hospital, where tuberculosis victims from the entertainment industry came for treatment. The film will premiere at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 10 at Saranac Village at Will Rogers.

Historic Saranac Lake contracted with Jim Griebisch to produce the historical film. Special historian for Will Rogers Memorial Hospital, Leslie Hoffman, provided research assistance. Caroline Welsh, Director Emerita of the Adirondack Museum, and Art and Museum Consultant, assisted with research and sequencing of the film.

Originally planned to be a short film of under fifteen minutes, the project has grown. It will feature original film footage and contemporary interviews with former patients and employees of the hospital.

"It's an incredible story," said Historic Saranac Lake Executive Director Amy Catania. "As a center for TB treatment and scientific research, Saranac Lake attracted tens of thousands of people from around the world with diverse talents. This film tells the fascinating story of the workers in the entertainment industry who suffered from tuberculosis."

Historic Saranac Lake will premiere the film at Saranac Village at Will Rogers, a natural venue for the event. Jamie Whidden, Saranac Village at Will Rogers Executive Director said, "We are honored to be hosting this special movie premier. It has been a wonderful experience for the staff here to work with the

movie producer to help facilitate the creation of a film that features former hospital employees and patients. Through this process we have learned more about our past while focusing on staying true to the roots of service, entertainment and connection that made this a great hospital in the past and a wonderful place to retire today.”

The film will be shown at 7:30 p.m. with light refreshments to follow. A special new exhibit honoring Will Rogers will be unveiled following the film. Admission is free of charge. In the spirit of the Will Rogers Foundation, a hat will be passed for donations to support Historic Saranac Lake and the Kolleyer Film Project. This important project is led by Jim Griebisch and includes the digitization of historic films from the Adirondack Room of the Saranac Lake Free Library.

A major grant from the Will Rogers Motion Picture Pioneers Foundation supported the production of the film as well as extensive exhibit renovations made this year at Historic Saranac Lake’s Saranac Laboratory Museum. The grant supported creation of a new temporary exhibition of antique medical devices titled “Medical Marvels” that opened in the John Black Room in June. The exhibit features artifacts on loan from Ripley’s Entertainment, Inc. and will be on display through the fall of 2016.

Founded in 1980, Historic Saranac Lake is a not-for-profit architectural preservation organization that captures and presents local history from their center at the Saranac Laboratory Museum.

### **About Will Rogers Hospital and the Foundation**

The Will Rogers Memorial Hospital was built in 1928-29 as the National Vaudeville Artists Lodge. It was an offshoot of the efforts of the National Vaudeville Association's (NVA) efforts to provide subsidized care to aging and unwell variety performers. In 1935, the NVA transferred the hospital to the newly established Will Rogers Memorial Commission, established after the death of the popular humorist, and broadened its services to all entertainers; funding was provided in part by nation-wide "Will Rogers audience collections." In 1936, the institution was renamed as the Will Rogers Memorial Hospital. The hospital closed in 1974. It now operates as an independent living retirement community — Saranac Village at Will Rogers.

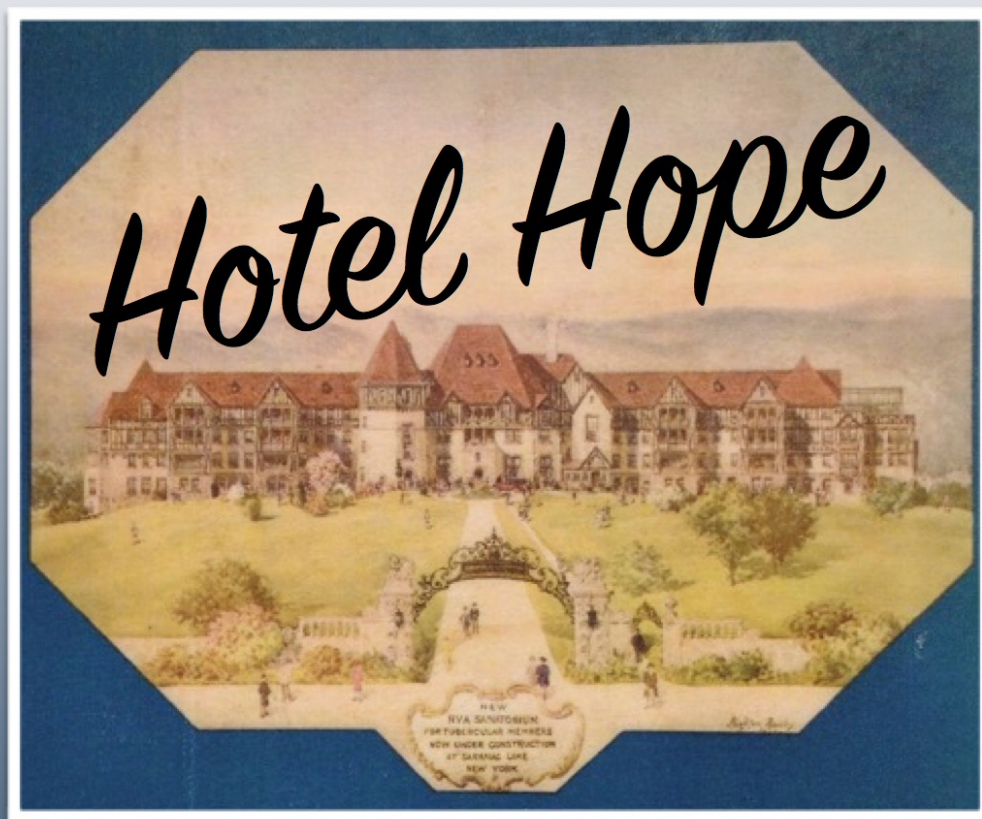
Although no longer connected to the former Will Rogers Hospital in Saranac Lake, the charitable Will Rogers organization continues, based out of Los Angeles. Today, Will Rogers Motion Picture Pioneers Foundation serves as a national charitable health program focused on research of debilitating lung disorders, medical school training fellowships, and distribution of free health education materials to the general public. It also operates the Pioneers

Assistance Fund to help individuals from the motion picture community who are encountering an illness, injury or life-changing event.

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## FILM PREMIERE

A documentary history of Will Rogers Memorial Hospital



Saturday, October 10, 7:30 p.m.  
at Saranac Village at Will Rogers  
admission free of charge

*A film by Jim Griebisch, commissioned by Historic Saranac Lake.  
Made possible with generous support from  
the Will Rogers Motion Pictures Pioneers Foundation.*



Todd Vradenburg, Executive Director of the Will Rogers Motion Picture Pioneers Foundation, visited the historic Little Red cure cottage during a visit earlier this year. Mr. Vradenburg will be a special guest at the October film premiere.