



**Bob Ross**<sup>®</sup>  
Inc.

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### **Public Statement from Bob Ross Inc.**

Bob Ross Inc. takes strong issue with the inaccurate and heavily slanted portrayal of our company in the Netflix film, *Bob Ross: Happy Accidents, Betrayal & Greed*.

Since the founding of Bob Ross Inc. in 1984, all of its equal partners – Bob and Jane Ross, and Walt and Annette Kowalski – shared the same goal: to promote and support the value of painting around the world. This was the company’s mission from its inception, through the latter days of Bob Ross’ life, and remains the company’s driving purpose after Bob’s untimely death over 25 years ago.

If not for the efforts of the remaining founders and their dedication to this mission, Bob’s artistic and cultural relevance – and his expressed desire to become the world’s most beloved painting teacher and friend – would have been lost decades ago with his passing.

Bob’s presence, inspiring positive outlook on everyday things, and his celebrated ability to provide serenity to audiences of all ages together, as accurately captured in the film, create the phenomenon we see today and are part of a business platform designed to nurture and amplify his gifts and turn them into the world’s treasure.

All of the products and merchandise seen today are just another way to share Bob’s message of positivity with people around the world. Bob Ross Inc.’s hope is that items bearing Bob’s likeness and messages prompt smiles as they remind people of the love of painting Bob shared with all. Bob was especially eager to explore ways to impart his sweet persona and the joy he found in making art with even non-painters, too – especially children – through collectibles, toys and knickknacks, and he was the driving creative force within the company until his passing.

While the producers of the Netflix film did contact Bob Ross Inc. twice, in late August and October 2020, each request arrived replete with a confounding lack of transparency. At no time did they pose specific questions to Bob Ross Inc. or ask for any form of rebuttal to specific assertions they had decided to include in the film. Nor was it stated that they had a distribution deal with Netflix.

Had the filmmakers communicated with openness in their correspondence, Bob Ross Inc. could have provided valuable information and context in an attempt to achieve a more balanced and informed film. However, as the director and producers carried on with the production without the perspective of Bob Ross Inc., the final narrative lacks considerable nuance and accuracy and carries a clear bias in favor of those who were interviewed. After seeing media reports about the film’s summer release, Bob Ross Inc. attempted to

reach out to the filmmakers in May 2021 to offer comment. They did not return calls or emails and finally responded through their attorney. We provided a comprehensive statement, and the filmmakers chose not to use it.

Specifically, in the film, Steve Ross says, “I have been wanting to get this story out for years” – a statement that shapes the overall direction of the film, creating the idea that he was previously prevented from doing so. Bob Ross Inc. never pursued or threatened legal action against Steve Ross, and, in fact, no one at Bob Ross Inc. heard from Steve Ross for almost twenty years, until 2017 when Steve filed suit against the company without any prior communication.

Bob Ross may not have shared the inherent structural features of his company with family and friends – which are very common in small private companies – resulting in many of the unsubstantiated accusations made in the film. Many of these baseless accusations attempt to relitigate claims brought against Bob Ross Inc. in 2017 by RSR Art LLC, a company owned by Steve Ross, Dana Jester and Lawrence Kapp, all of whom appear in the film. Those claims were rejected by a court of law in 2019. RSR Art then filed an appeal, which was dismissed at RSR Art’s request after the parties reached a settlement through a standard court-ordered mediation process.

In 2011, Bob Ross Inc. and its host PBS station produced a documentary together entitled *Bob Ross: The Happy Painter* to be used by public television stations during pledge seasons and to enhance their fundraising efforts. Because of *Bob Ross: The Happy Painter*, Bob Ross Inc. has routinely declined to participate in any of the additional (dozen or so) Bob Ross-related film requests it has received over the years.

Bob Ross Inc. supports a vibrant, worldwide art community by putting a brush into the hands of more first-time painters than any other movement in history. We embrace fans that never intend to paint at all, but still crave Bob’s delightful personality and loving, positive spirit. We enthusiastically support the public television system, a true American treasure; art-related education and charitable projects, including with the Smithsonian and the U.S. Air Force First Sergeant Academy; and the new Bob Ross Experience museum in Muncie, Indiana. The efforts of Bob Ross Inc. and our dozen employees have allowed Bob’s incredible accomplishments and his love of painting to thrive – and we remain committed to enhancing his wonderful legacy well into the future.