Along with raising more than $156,000 in gifts and pledges to the College, the class of 2009 also left behind something even more permanent: Sergeant Cheerleader. The brainchild of senior Matt Pinsker, Sergeant Cheerleader followed the story of a William and Mary student caught between the conflicting worlds of Tribe Cheerleading and ROTC. Although the plot seemed far-fetched to some, the storyline drew heavily from actual events in Pinsker’s life at William and Mary.

“My inspiration for writing the film was my own experience at the College where I was simultaneously an Army ROTC cadet and a male cheerleader,” Pinsker said. In addition, Pinsker included references to those close to him. “The screenplay is very closely based on my own experiences at the College, and many of the characters are based on the people who have had the most impact on me at William and Mary,” Pinsker said.

“Making this film has been a non-profit enterprise, I hope to give profits to charity as well as help pay for the distribution of the film.” In addition, Pinsker planned to enter Sergeant Cheerleader into a variety of film festivals in order to not only show off his work, but also pay homage to the place where he spent his life as an undergraduate.

Sergeant Cheerleader was incredibly well received by students at the College who appreciated it for its comedic depiction of someone striving to overcome the pressure to conform. Furthermore, as indicated by its writer/producer, (a government major, cheerleader, and ROTC member) it stood as an indication of the well-roundedness of William and Mary students.

Sergeant Cheerleader was a testament to the diversity and open-mindedness of the William and Mary community.

Jessica Johnson

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A feature-length independent student film produced on campus

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The cheerleaders strut onto the mat to perform their final routine. The actors and actresses practiced many hours to create the routine and perform it perfectly during the filming.

Two main cheerleaders of the film, Shifra de Benedictis-Kessner and Hope Wright stop for a photo in a break from filming. Many of the actors became good friends on the set.

Using the Sadler Center lobby as a make-shift makeup room, the makeup artists get the actors ready for the camera. All of the filming took place at locations around campus.

Ready, and action!

Photo courtesy of Sergeant Cheerleader Facebook group.

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