Karl and Rhonda Wilson won Best Florida Production at the 2013 Gasparilla International Film Festival for their film "Breaking Up With Rosie," which is showing at 2 p.m. Thursday at SCF Bradenton.

MANATEE -- Lakewood Ranch independent filmmakers Rhonda and Karl Wilson will speak at a free screening of their award-winning comedy "Breaking Up With Rosie" at 2 p.m. Thursday in the David S. & Anne V. Howard Studio Theatre at State College of Florida, 5840 26th St. W., Bradenton.

Working full time while rearing three children hasn't put a damper on the couple's dreams for success, with "Breaking Up With Rosie" having won Best Florida Production at the 2013 Gasparilla International Film Festival.

The SCF alums are now in pre-production for their next project: "Catching Junior Tate."

"On our first date he probably talked two or three hours about his dreams and passions. I was 18 and I thought he was the cutest thing ever," said Rhonda Wilson, who met her future husband when her pastor encouraged her to return to church and meet the young man. "Movies weren't my passion. Over the years we tried different things, but I've always been supportive of what he wanted to do. His dreams became my dreams."
The Wilsons attended SCF. She studied business and he took film classes with Del Jacobs, professor and film production technology program manager.

"When we finally reconnected, he reminded me of some of the exercises we used to do in class that helped him in honing his skills. Karl was always focused and planned his assignments with great detail," Jacobs said. "At the heart of it all is: Are you a good communicator? And both of them, Rhonda and Karl, are.

"I did not know Rhonda when she was here, but with Karl, we just picked up where we left off."

The mentor relationship continues.

"He gave me the script to his next film, so it's nice to be trusted that way," said Jacobs, who also is a member of the Sarasota Film Commission.

"'Breaking Up With Rosie' is our first feature, though we have done a few shorts in the past," Karl Wilson said. "The idea spawned from this vision I had of this really fun scene where two love interests find themselves in this loud chaotic environment, but for the two of them, despite all that is going on around them, it's as if they were the only two people there. They see each other across the sea of chaos and are drawn to one another.

"Basically, I wrote the plot around that scene, how do we get these two people to this moment and where do they go from there?"

The film was shot primarily in Sarasota and Manatee counties using talent from as far away as Miami, but mostly from the Tampa Bay area. They completed production in January 2012 over 11 days and completed post-production in late November.

"Not counting pre-production it took 11 months. If you count pre-production, 15 months," said Wilson.

"We basically did the shooting over a two-week period," his wife said. "We had taken two weeks off of work to get the shooting done. Unfortunately, my company was going through some growth at the time so I was running back and forth between some locations. We juggled the best we could."

The couple's two older children got involved, although their 4-year-old, Jakob, didn't care, she said. Jordan, 17, who attends Southeast High, acted in some scenes, and Aly, 10, worked hard enough to earn assistant producer credit.

Working so closely as a couple stressed the twosome.

"We've been married almost 18 years and it just is one of those things. We've obviously had a lot of struggles and things we've overcome in 18 years, but when you love someone, you love someone. We tried to remain as professional as we could when we disagreed, to say the least, at least in front of cast and crew," the wife said. "In the end we both are so focused and goal-driven
that we both want the same thing. We want it to be successful, and we key into what we want to achieve."