Robert Drew, a pioneer of the modern documentary who in "Primary" and other movies mastered the intimate, spontaneous style known as cinema verite and schooled a generation of influential directors that included DA Pennebaker and Albert Maysles, has died at age 90. His son Thatcher Drew confirmed he died Wednesday morning at his home in Sharon.

Starting in 1960 with "Primary," Drew produced and directed a series of television documentaries that took advantage of such innovations as light, handheld cameras that recorded both sound and pictures. With filmmakers newly unburdened, nonfiction movies no longer had to be carefully staged and awkwardly narrated. Directors could work more like journalists, following their subjects for hours and days at a time and capturing revealing moments. Little, if any, voiceover was needed.

"Nonfiction filmmakers were afflicted by two problems, one technical, the other spiritual," Drew once said. "Technically, they did not have the equipment to do the sort of work I had in mind. Spiritually, they didn't care about the work because they'd been mistrained. They'd been mistrained because their equipment was so heavy and complicated that it made it impossible to shoot in situations where you could really capture reality."


While a photographer and editor with Life, Drew formed Drew Associates in 1960 with the goal of applying his magazine experience to films. Among those joining him were such future directors as Pennebaker ("Don't Look Back," "The War Room"), Maysles (who with brother David made " Gimme Shelter" and "Grey Gardens") and Richard Leacock ("Happy Mother's Day").

"I wondered why documentaries on television were dull," he told The New York Times in 2013. "I had no doubt we could make a lighter camera, and I started with that premise and started finding people who could do that."—AP

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**Elusive Van Morrison headlines 50th Cambridge Folk Festival**

When Cambridge City Council decided to hold a music festival in the historic English university town back in 1964, few expected it to be going strong 50 years later. But this year the Cambridge Folk Festival is celebrating its golden anniversary in style with headline Van Morrison - who had to be courted for years before he agreed to attend - as well as Roseanne Cash and Sinead O'Connor.

There also will be time for folksy pursuits like rapper dancing, which is a dance using a short sword, and yarn bombing - the graffiti version of knitting. It's this eclectic approach that keeps people coming back year after year to the festival, which runs from July 31 to Aug 3. And although it has evolved and expanded since the 1960s, it is still held at the compact Cherry Hinton Hall site just outside town.

"We have withstood the pressure to expand the festival or move it to a larger site because we appreciate the intimacy of the performance is what people really like - the site and the size of the marquees have been integral to our success," said Eddie Barcan, who has run the festival since 1993. This year Barcan is particularly pleased to have booked the 68-year-old Morrison, who has never played the festival before, despite repeated invitations. "I've tried many times in the past," Barcan said. "You just keep chipping away."

Barcan took up the baton after the death of local firefighter Ken Woolard, who would organise the early festivals from a public phone box outside Cambridge Fire Station. In his first year he booked The Watersons, Peggy Seeger and a young Paul Simon, who was a late addition to the bill. The festival quickly developed a reputation for offering everything from traditional British, Irish and American folk music to cajun, zydeco, klezmer, roots and blues.

In later years it has attracted more popular artists, while maintaining a good track record for spotting talent early. Folk stalwarts Richard Thompson, plus Eliza and Martin Carthy, who are part of the Waterman clan, will also be performing. The Newcastle Kingsmen Sword Dancers will entertain the crowd with some old school rapper dancing.

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**At Skywalker Ranch, the 'Force' of George Lucas is everywhere**

George Lucas, the man behind the mega-successful interplanetary saga "Star Wars," may well have retired, but his spirit looms large at the famous Skywalker Ranch. The creator of Luke, Leia, Indiana Jones and Darth Vader bought the property in 1978 with proceeds from the first blockbuster hit, "Star Wars" to realize his dream of creating a haven for filmmaking outside Hollywood, at a cost of around $100 million, according to the Wall Street Journal.

Rare visitors allowed into the huge complex — 4,700 acres (1,900 hectares) near San Francisco—must first weave around hills, orchards, and pastures occupied by cows and deer. Within its boundaries, there are several screening rooms, an underground pool and even a small inn for clients and friends. "The ranch has its own police force to keep the public out," said Barcan.

This July 20, 2014 photo shows a view of US filmmaker, director, screenwriter, producer, George Lucas' Skywalker Ranch located in Nicasio, California. — AFP

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**Photo provided by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Anne and Robert Drew, left, join Ed Carter and Grace Guggenheim, right, during an event honoring him at the National Archives in Washington, DC. — AP**