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## Chapman Commemorates 60th Anniversary of Mendez v. Westminster Case on April 14

**ORANGE, Calif., March 26, 2007** Chapman University will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the 1947 Mendez v. Westminster case that desegregated California's schools with a full morning of events on Saturday, April 14, 8 a.m. to 12 noon, in the Bush Conference Center, Beckman Hall Rm. 404. The events will be highlighted by the official unveiling of the U.S. Postal Service's new Mendez v. Westminster: Toward Equality in Our Schools commemorative postal stamp.

Other events that morning will include panel discussions by members of the plaintiff families in the case and other special guests, a screening of producer Sandra Robbie's Emmy-winning film on the Mendez case *For All the Children/Para Todos Los Nios*, a map-guided Civil Rights Tour through Orange, performances of the play *The Mexican O.C.* by Breath of Fire Theater Company, and more. Robbie's MvW Magical History Tour Bus will also be on hand, offering exhibits that will make the historic civil-rights case come to life. A complete schedule is below.

Admission to the Mendez v. Westminster 60th Anniversary event at Chapman University is free and open to the public; however, space is limited and reservations are required. To make a reservation, or for more information, the public can call (714) 532-7701.

The Mendez v. Westminster 60th Anniversary event was coordinated by Dr. Anaida Colon-Muniz of the Chapman University School of Education and is co-sponsored by the Chapman University Committee on Diversity, the School of Education, Sandra Robbie and the MvW Magical History Tour, the United States Postal Service and the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women.

**MENDEZ v. WESTMINSTER 60th ANNIVERSARY  
and U.S. POSTAL STAMP UNVEILING  
At Chapman University  
Bush Conference Center, Beckman Hall Rm. 404  
Saturday, April 14, 2007**

**8 a.m. Registration begins.** (Pre-registration required: 714-532-7701)

**9 a.m. Official welcome and introductions.**

**9:15 a.m. Screening of *For All the Children/Para Todos Los Nios*** with introduction by the Emmy-winning film producer, Sandra Robbie.

**10 a.m. Official U.S. Postal Service unveiling of the new Mendez v. Westminster stamp.**

**10:30 a.m. First panel discussion** with plaintiffs from all five families in the Mendez v.

Westminster case (Mendez, Estrada, Guzman, Palomino and Ramirez) and the Munemitsu family (Japanese Americans interned during World War II), chaired by Dr. Marisol Arredondo of Chapman University.

**11 a.m. Screening of segment of Eyes on the Prize** video on the Little Rock Nine.

**11:30 a.m. Second panel discussion** with Dr. Terrence Roberts and Minnijean Brown Trickey, members of the Little Rock Nine (the African American students who integrated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957 under the protection of armed guards ordered by President Eisenhower), Sandra Robbie and Judge Frederick P. Aguirre of the Superior Court of the County of Orange, chaired by Dr. Mildred Lewis of Chapman University.

**Noon -- Meet and Greet Special Guests, Civil Rights Tour of Orange** (No reservations required.)

Opportunity to meet, photograph and get autographs from the special guests/civil rights advocates. Then the guests of honor will accompany the public on a walking tour of locations in Orange where history happened: a schoolhouse that was once for Mexicans only, a formerly segregated movie theater and swimming pool, and more.

**7 p.m. Theater Performance: *The Mexican O.C.* by Breath of Fire Theatre Company.** Free admission; separate reservation required: call (714) 540-1157. Location: Beckman Hall 404. This play will also be performed Sunday, April 15 at 2 p.m. in Beckman 404. An original play in two acts directed by Sara Guerrero and performed by a cast of local Orange County actors this funny and poignant collection of stories, based on oral histories and archival research, seeks both to entertain and to eliminate the stereotypes of Orange County's Mexican community.

#### **ABOUT THE MENDEZ V. WESTMINSTER CASE**

Thanks to the brave battle launched by the Mendez family in the 1940s, California became the first state in the nation to desegregate its schools. At the time, California like many states had segregated schools, movie theaters, even swimming pools. When third-grader Sylvia Mendez, accompanied by her siblings, was not allowed to attend an all-white Westminster school because she was Mexican, her parents Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez sued the school district and the rest is history. The 1947 Mendez v. Westminster case, a class-action lawsuit filed on behalf of more than 5,000 Mexican American students in Orange County, made California the first state in the nation to end school segregation, paving the way for the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court ruling that desegregated all U.S. schools in 1954.