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Mark Axelrod, Professor of English, Receives Fulbright

ORANGE, Calif., Jan. 18, 2010 -- Mark Axelrod, Ph.D., professor of English at Chapman University, has been awarded a Fulbright Scholars Fellowship to teach screenwriting at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil. For 13 years he has been the director of Chapman's John Fowles Center for Creative Writing, which he founded and for which he has received four National Endowment for the Arts Grants. The Center is in its second decade of presenting a much-lauded annual series of talks and readings by famous authors from around the world, which has brought writers ranging from Lawrence Ferlinghetti to Salman Rushdie to Chapman University. Dr. Axelrod is also an accomplished novelist, short-story writer and screenwriter who has written many published and produced works.

Dr. Axelrod said of the Fulbright fellowship: I'm humbled that I received it. The Fulbright is one of those awards that everyone knows by one name. It's recognized around the world like the Guggenheim. Because it's an award that is judged by one's peers and because it's one of most long-standing of awards, it makes it a very special award to receive.

Dr. Axelrod's lectures in Sao Paulo, which begin this summer, will focus on the fundamentals of storytelling, characters and conflict, and two areas he believes are often ignored in screenwriting: dialogue and adaptation. To teach the importance and significance of dialogue, for example, we will examine *The Graduate*, *Pulp Fiction* and *Ordinary People* all films that all have outstanding dialogue, he said.

Dr. Axelrod has taught Brazilian students and finds that they bring a sensibility to film that is often different than those found in other countries. Brazilian students, he says, want to write scripts that are character-driven, that often deal with personal and, sometimes, painful stories. I've found the same thing in places like Germany and Finland, Spain and Denmark. The experiences they bring are often very different than the experiences North American students bring.

Dr. Axelrod has received many other awards, including two United Kingdom Leverhulme Fellowships for Creative Writing as well as awards from the Sundance Institute. He is also a three-time recipient of the Alliance Francaise National Writing Award. Prior to teaching at Chapman, he taught at the University of East Anglia in England and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. He holds his B.A. and M.A. from Indiana University and his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota.

Among his published fictional works are *Capital Castles* (Pacific Writers Press, 2000), *Cloud Castles* (Pacific Writers Press, 1998), *Cardboard Castles* (Pacific Writers Press, 1996), *Bombay California* (Pacific Writers Press, 1994) and *Borges Travel, Hemingway's Garage* (fc2, 2005); he has also published more than 30 stories in literary journals. His critical books include *The Politics of Style in the Fiction of Balzac, Beckett and Cortzar* (Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 1990)

and *The Poetics of Novels* (Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 1999). He has translated three works: Xavier de Maistre's novella *Un voyage autour de ma chambre*, Balzac's play *Mercadet*, and Baudelaire's novella *La Fanfarlo*. He is also a regular contributor to the Huffington Post (www.huffingtonpost.com).

A corresponding member of the international film organization CILECT, Dr. Axelrod is a practicing screenwriter and has won awards for his writing from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; the Writers Guild of America, East; the Screenwriters Forum (University of Wisconsin) and the Sundance Institute. He has written more than 20 screenplays and teleplays, and his adaptation and co-production of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *An Author's Mother* won awards from the Scottish Association of Filmmakers, the London International Film & Video Festival, and the Festival Internacional de Video do Algarve, Portugal. He has taught or conducted screenwriting seminars and workshops throughout Latin America, Europe, and the United Kingdom as well as the United States.

For four years, he was a regular visiting adjunct professor of screenwriting at the Hamburg Media School, Hamburg, Germany. In 2006, he was invited by the United States Embassy in Berlin to speak on screenwriting and to conduct screenwriting lectures at a number of German universities in Munich, Berlin and Cologne, among other places. PEN, the international literary and human rights organization, asked him to be the lead judge for the 2006 Best Original Screenplay Award. In addition, he has been invited to conduct screenwriting lectures at the John Huston School of Film and Digital Media, Galway, Ireland as well as at the Baltic Film School, Tallinn University, Estonia; UIAH, Helsinki, Finland; and Black Coffee Films, Mumbai, India. In August 2008 he was invited to teach at ARCOS Film School in Santiago, Chile at the invitation of the U.S. Embassy in Chile, and gave talks in Buenos Aires at the invitation of the U.S. Embassy in Argentina. In 2008 he was invited by UNIACC Film School in Santiago to participate in a major Latin American screenwriting conference sponsored by IBERMEDIA.

Dr. Axelrod's film books include *Aspects of the Screenplay* (Heinemann, 2001), *Character & Conflict: Cornerstones of Screenwriting* (Heinemann, 2004); and *I Read It at the Movies: Screen Adaptation* (Heinemann, 2006). A fourth book titled *The Scene and How to Write It* is slated for publication by Focus Press in 2011, and a fifth book, *Selling Short: Screenwriting for the New Millennium* is being considered for publication in 2012. His latest scripts include *Seven Days in Santiago* with Chilean director Edgardo Viereck and *Encino Story*, an adaptation of the Yasujiro Ozu film *Tokyo Story*, with American director David Anspaugh (*Hoosiers*).