

9-25-2008

## Rueben Martinez Appointed as Presidential Fellow

Chapman University Media Relations

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/press\\_releases](http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/press_releases)



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Chapman University Media Relations, "Rueben Martinez Appointed as Presidential Fellow" (2008). *Chapman Press Releases 2003-2011*. Paper 163.

[http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/press\\_releases/163](http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/press_releases/163)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Chapman Press at Chapman University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Chapman Press Releases 2003-2011 by an authorized administrator of Chapman University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [laughtin@chapman.edu](mailto:laughtin@chapman.edu).



## Rueben Martinez Appointed as Presidential Fellow

### **The MacArthur “Genius Grant” Recipient, Latino Cultural Leader and Owner of Santa Ana’s Librería Martinez will join Chapman in January**

**ORANGE, Calif., Sept. 25, 2008** – Chapman University has named one of Orange County’s most respected cultural leaders, Ruebén Martinez, its newest Presidential Fellow. Martinez, the recipient of a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (famously referred to as a “genius grant”) in 2004, is well known as the owner of Santa Ana’s Librería Martinez Books and Art Gallery, as a speaker at hundreds of events at schools, nonprofits and conferences throughout the world, and as a champion of literacy, especially in the Latino community.

As a Presidential Fellow at Chapman, Martinez will have an office on campus and will report directly to Chapman President Jim Doti, receiving direction from Don Cardinal, Ph.D., dean of Chapman’s College of Educational Studies. He will be a member of a Chapman team dedicated to bringing first-generation students into Chapman’s science and math programs, improving the community’s math and science literacy, and will act as a community ambassador to facilitate the success of the program. Martinez will officially begin his work at Chapman in January 2009.

“We are delighted and honored to welcome Ruebén Martinez as our newest Presidential Fellow,” said Chapman President Jim Doti. “His work in recruiting first-generation students to enroll here, especially in the crucial areas of mathematics and science, will be vitally important to Chapman, as our new Schmid College of Science grows and expands, and to the community, as these students graduate and take their place as the scientists, technicians and medical personnel of tomorrow.”

Chapman Chancellor Daniele Struppa, who along with Dean Cardinal was instrumental in bringing Martinez to the university, said, “Rueben Martinez is proof that intellectual curiosity and a love of reading can completely transform a life, and his contagious enthusiasm in spreading the word about reading to young people is an inspiration to us all. He demonstrates every day that one person can be a dynamic catalyst for change.”

Born in 1940 in the small mining town of Miami, Arizona, Martinez moved to California at age 17 and worked as a barber. His Santa Ana barbershop became a gathering place not only for the Latino community but for many of the movers and shakers of Orange County. Martinez became active in politics and as a community cultural leader, and when he realized the Latino community didn’t have a bookstore that met their needs, he added a small collection of books to his barbershop. The books soon outgrew the barbershop, and Librería Martinez Books and Art Gallery, along with Libros Para Niños, a children’s bookstore, were born. Many world-famous authors, including Isabel Allende, Sandra Cisneros, Jorge Ramos, Gary Soto, Rudolfo Anaya and others have visited his store.

Martinez received the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 2004. Nicknamed the “genius grant,” this \$500,000 award, paid out over five years, is given to 20 to 40 people each year by the John D. and Katherine T. MacArthur Foundation to recognize “exceptional merit and promise for continued and enhanced creative work.” Martinez was cited by the awards committee for “fusing the roles of marketplace and community center to inspire appreciation of literature and preserve Latino literary heritage.”

Martinez is in demand nationwide as a keynote speaker, and has guested on numerous radio and television shows, including PBS’s Tavis Smiley Show, Univision’s Primer Edición and Despierta America, the CBS Early Show and CBS Evening News, ABC’s Tell the Truth, NBC’s Dr. Laura Show, and NPR’s Larry Mantle Show. He has been featured in People magazine, People en Español, USA Today, Readers Digest, The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Entrepreneur magazine, the Orange County Register, La Opinion, Excelsior, Bello magazine and many others.

Among the awards he has received, in addition to the MacArthur Fellowship, are the HEEF Golden Apple Award, the Hispanic Influential Award for the United Way, Small Business of the Year from the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Latino Spirit Award from the California Latino Legislative Caucus, and others.