

NEWS

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The UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television (UCLA TFT) has received a generous leadership gift from the Marty and Leah Sklar Family to create the Marty Sklar Entertainment Innovation Fellowship.

The late Marty Sklar, who earned his bachelor's degree at UCLA and received the 2007 Professional Achievement Award from UCLA Alumni Association, built a prolific career leading Walt Disney Imagineering and developing Disney theme parks and attractions. In keeping with Sklar's professional legacy, the fellowship will support students at the Center for Research in Engineering, Media and Performance (REMAP). A joint effort of UCLA TFT and UCLA Samueli School of Engineering, REMAP explores the intersections between engineering, the arts and community development, facilitating collaborative projects that integrate technology with artistic creativity.

The new Sklar fellowship, which benefited from additional funding from the UCLA Chancellor's Centennial Scholars Match Initiative, will annually provide three high-achieving students with at least \$10,000 each to participate in REMAP projects. Past projects have included developing augmented reality approaches for immersive storytelling, collaborating with California State Parks on the future of interpretive design and creating innovative cyberlearning environments for elementary school students at UCLA Lab School. In Fall 2020, the UCLA Department of Theater and REMAP will launch a new interdisciplinary graduate certificate in Emerging Technologies for Performance, building further opportunities at UCLA TFT for students to explore the type of innovation supported by the Sklar fellowship.

"This fellowship is an exciting and appropriate way to honor Marty Sklar, a pioneer in demonstrating how artistic creativity can drive engineering innovation," said Jeff Burke, UCLA TFT alumnus, associate dean for technology and innovation, and REMAP's founding executive director. "REMAP student recipients will integrate artistic and engineering advances in their work, making the most of UCLA's premier position as a top research institution in the entertainment capital of the world." Beloved by the UCLA and Disney communities, Sklar believed in mentorship and nurtured the careers of countless creative individuals in the themed entertainment industry; he was affectionately called "the Jiminy Cricket of Imagineering." He left his role as Vice Chairman and Principal Creative Executive of Imagineering in 2006 and served as Imagineering Ambassador until he retired on July 17, 2009, the 54th anniversary of Disneyland's opening. His first Disney role started while he was still a UCLA student: As *Daily Bruin* editor, Sklar was recruited in 1955 to create *The Disneyland News* for the brand-new park.

Sklar's influence will live on through the new fellowship and its recipients. On behalf of Sklar's family, his wife, Leah, said, "Marty maintained a strong connection to the UCLA community, which we wanted to honor with this fellowship gift. With his passion for mentorship and his career devoted to an industry representing the nexus between imagination and engineering, Marty would be excited by this opportunity to encourage students in exploring collaborative innovations in entertainment and technology."