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UCSB's Carsey-Wolf Center Names Richard Hutton Executive Director, Announces Opening of Pollock Theater

Richard Hutton, formerly the vice president of media development at Vulcan Productions and an award-winning documentary filmmaker, has been appointed executive director of the Carsey-Wolf Center at UC Santa Barbara.

Named for Emmy Award-winning television producers Marcy Carsey and Dick Wolf in recognition of their generous support, the center brings together UCSB faculty members and scholars from film and media studies and communication -- as well as other departments in the arts, humanities, and sciences -- to teach and conduct research on all forms of mass media from a variety of cultural, historical, and social perspectives.

"We are very fortunate that Richard has agreed to helm the Carsey-Wolf Center," Marcy Carsey and Dick Wolf said in a joint statement. "We all share the same vision, and his unique experience in the business sector and as a filmmaker makes him our ideal partner. We are looking forward to working with Richard and the UCSB team in nurturing this important new venture."

According to Hutton, the center "is not just a series of buildings, but a big idea." He noted that its primary purpose is to advance a rigorous liberal arts education and do so through the lens of film, television, and other media. "A hundred years ago, media had a minor impact on how we got information. Now, the media is an essential factor, a crucial filter. Receiving a liberal arts education without understanding media's influence can leave you uninformed," he said.

The center also serves as a bridge between the university and industry by focusing scholarly efforts on issues specific to the media industries as a whole. "Film, television, Internet, all new media are working hard to understand what business models will drive them in the 21st century," Hutton continued. "And the kinds of research and analyses that are undertaken at UC Santa Barbara can offer valuable insight into that process."

A physical component of the Carsey-Wolf Center is the Pollock Theater, a new state-of-the-art venue provides space for year-round programming of a diverse array of films and filmmakers. Named for Joseph and Helene Pollock, the 298-seat theater is the heart of the center, Hutton noted, serving as a classroom by day and a public theater at night where students, industry leaders, and members of the community may gather.

"Thanks to the support of our donors, we have been able to hire a distinguished professional with extensive experience in bridging the worlds of media and scholarship," said David Marshall, dean of UCSB's Division of Humanities and Fine Arts and executive dean of the College of Letters & Science "Working with co-directors Constance Penley and Ron Rice, he will help the center implement its research, educational, and public programs and realize the potential of its vision."

Said Ronald Rice, the Arthur N. Rupe Chair in the Social Effects of Mass Communication and co-director of the Carsey-Wolf Center: "This is the perfect time for Richard Hutton to be joining the Carsey-Wolf Center, and UCSB. With the new Pollock Theater, the Media Industries Project, the Environmental Media Initiative, and the internship program all rapidly expanding through grants, resources from our deans, and generous donor support, Richard brings tremendous management experience, media expertise, industry connections, and vision to lead us forward."

Added Constance Penley, professor of film and media studies and the center's other co-director: "As a noted science writer, awarded documentary and feature producer,

and former Disney Imagineer, Richard Hutton has the perfect set of talents and experience to help us realize the vision of the Carsey-Wolf Center. After all the hard work so many of us on campus have put into building the center, it is exhilarating to have Richard here to take us to new heights in teaching, research, and public programming."

As director of Vulcan Inc.'s media development projects, Hutton produced or co-produced a wide range of shows for PBS, including the documentaries "This Emotional Life," a three-part series that explores the nature of human social relationships; "Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial," a two-hour program for Nova that chronicles the latest battle in the war over evolution; "Strange Days on Planet Earth," a four-part series on the environment; the Emmy Award-winning "Rx for Survival," a six-part series on global health; the Peabody and Grammy Award-winning "No Direction Home: Bob Dylan"; and the Emmy and Grammy Award-winning "Martin Scorsese Presents The Blues."

Hutton was also the executive producer of the critically acclaimed, Emmy-nominated PBS series "Evolution"; the Peabody Award-winning "Black Sky: The Race for Space"; and the blues concert film "Lightning in a Bottle." Among the feature films produced or co-produced under his direction are the Humanitas Prize winner "Where God Left His Shoes," which stars John Leguizamo; the critically acclaimed "Hard Candy" and "Bickford Schmeckler's Cool Ideas"; and "Far From Heaven," which received the Independent Spirit Award for Best Picture.

Prior to joining Vulcan, Hutton was senior vice president of creative development at Walt Disney Imagineering, and served as vice president and general manager of the Disney Institute.

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