

The brainstorm of UCR's Harry Lawton, faculty member and himself a writer (*Willie Boy*, later translated into movie form with Robert Redford, Katharine Ross and Robert Blake), Writer's Week now enters its ninth successful year. It started as a literary adjunct to UCR's Creative Writing Program and has provided a showcase for nationally acclaimed literary figures as well as new writers and local talent. Under Lawton's direction, the event has drawn crowds in the thousands and has featured such well known poets and novelists as Kesey, Larry McMurtry, Allen Ginsberg, Maxine Hong Kingston, the late Josephine Miles, Sherley Anne Williams, Tillie Olsen, Ishmael Reed, Vance Bourjaily, Wanda Coleman, Holly Prado and many more.

### Creative Writing Program

UCR's writing community began to emerge as far back as the 1950s, with the encouragement of Milton Miller, associate professor of English. It was a small group of area writers interested in sharing ideas and inspiration and had no formal connection to the university at first. In the late 1960s, recognizing UCR's needs and opportunities, Miller set up and formalized the Creative Writing Program at the Riverside campus. It has been expanding ever since.

Under English Professor Edwin Eigner's chairmanship in the early 1980s the program was highlighted by

the Intercampus Teaching Project for Writers. It brought together the top creative writers from each of the nine UC campuses for a two-day workshop and featured readings and a university-sponsored literary competition. Eigner was also instrumental in the 1979 formation of the original Writer's Workshop at UCR.

At present, the Creative Writing program offers courses in a wide range of areas, such as poetry, fiction, playwriting, drama and journalism, taught at various levels—from introductory to advanced writing. The Creative Writing Program offers a supplemental enrichment to many other disciplines, as well as providing a focus for students interested in writing as a professional career.

As current chairman, Miller emphasizes the program is not tied to any specific department or discipline.

"Writers have interests and jobs as varied as life itself," he says. "They are doctors, lawyers, anthropologists, journalists, teachers, business and insurance executives, scientists and whatnot. The Creative Writing Program encourages and fosters that variety.

"Half of our students come from the sciences, the other half from the humanities and the social sciences," Miller said.

"The Creative Writing faculty itself brings professional variety to the program. It consists of poets, novelists, short story writers, and playwrights

who do not confine themselves to Creative Writing alone. They also work in a variety of other major areas in the university, such as French, English, Spanish, the agricultural and natural sciences, as well as theater, political science, anthropology, and journalism."

Among the current Creative Writing staff, in addition to Program Chairman Miller, are professors Edwin Eigner, Ana Maria Fagundo, William Mead, Ben Stoltzfus, and instructors Ada Schmid, Judy Kronenfeld, Harry Lawton and Maurya Simon.

Creative writing at UCR has been the starting point for many students and affiliates who have become established names as writers. Among the rising stars are Vicki Hearne, prize-winning poet who now teaches creative writing at Yale and is a contributing editor to *Harper's*; Frank Bidart, noted poet who now teaches creative writing (Wellesley); Stephen Vincent, a San Francisco writer and publisher; Laura Kalpakian, novelist and writing instructor; Katherine Davis, author of *The Dakotas, Memories and Ashes* and other historical-romance novels; Bethany Schroeder, now an editor of *Epoch* at Cornell; newly published poets Marcia Muldoon, Deborah Digges, Diana Garber, and Susan Bokanovich. A new addition to the list of luminaries, former UCR student-turned-staff-member Jim Brown has recently authored a book on the history of Riverside entitled *Harvest of the Sun*.

Photos: Michael Elderman



The legendary Ken Kesey, author of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Sometimes a Great Notion*, as he tantalized a crowd with tales of his exploits and readings from his work during UCR's annual Writer's Week.