



NEWS RELEASE

ROBERT MANDEL NAMED DEAN OF AFI CONSERVATORY

LOS ANGELES, October 11, 2005—American Film Institute (AFI) today announced that director and AFI Conservatory alumnus Robert Mandel has been named Dean of the AFI Conservatory.

Mandel graduated from AFI in 1979 and is an award-winning director with credits including *FX*, *SCHOOL TIES*, *BIG SHOTS* and *THE SUBSTITUTE*. He has also directed numerous television movies for HBO, Fox, Lifetime and A&E, as well as episodic television such as *THE X-FILES* (pilot), *LOST* and *PRISON BREAK*.

“Having an alumnus at the helm of the AFI Conservatory for the first time in its 36-year history is an exciting moment. Robert Mandel brings a dedication to filmmaking based on storytelling well told. He will continue the strong traditions of the AFI Conservatory together with respect for the 21st century digital opportunities,” stated Jon Avnet, AFI Conservatory alumnus and chair of AFI’s Board of Directors.

"There's an emotional component to accepting the honor and responsibilities of Conservatory Dean. I'm a product of AFI. AFI changed my life and made my film career possible. And now I look forward to helping shape and launch the careers of those just embarking on their AFI years," stated Mandel.

Mandel began his career as a stage director, with productions at The Manhattan Theatre Club, The Roundabout and The Public Theatre—where Joseph Papp was his mentor. He has MFA degrees from both Columbia University and AFI. Mandel has taught at City College of New York and has been a Directing Mentor at The Sundance Institute.

Mandel received the Alfred Hitchcock Award when he was at AFI and his thesis film, *NIGHT AT O'REARS*, received First Prize at Filmex in LA; First Prize at USA Film Festival in Dallas, TX; and was shown as one of three short films selected by the New York Film Festival at Lincoln Center.

As Dean, Mandel will oversee all activities at the AFI Conservatory, a two-year accredited MFA program, which grants degrees in six filmmaking disciplines—Cinematography, Directing, Editing, Producing, Production Design and Screenwriting.

About the American Film Institute

AFI is a national institute providing leadership in screen education and the recognition and celebration of excellence in the art of film, television and digital media. AFI trains the next generation of filmmakers at its world-renowned Conservatory, maintains America's film heritage through the *AFI Catalog of Feature Films* and explores new digital technologies in entertainment and education through the AFI Digital Content Lab and K-12 Screen Education Center. As the largest nonprofit exhibitor in the US, AFI ON SCREEN encompasses the annual AFI FEST presented by Audi: AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival—as well as year-round programming at ArcLight Hollywood and the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center in Silver Spring, Maryland, including SILVERDOCS: AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Festival. AFI AWARDS, the annual almanac for the 21st century, honors the most outstanding motion pictures and television programs of the year, while **AFI's 100 Years . . .** series has ignited extraordinary public interest in classic American movies. And, during the past 33 years, AFI's Life Achievement Award has become the highest honor for a career in film. Additional information about AFI is available at AFI.com.

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NOTE: Photos are available upon request.

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