

LAURA AXELROD: WRITER, FILMMAKER AND ACTOR MAKES HOME IN CULLMAN

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CULLMAN – Cullman is full of talented people. There are lots of artists and musicians, photographers and poets. Some have multiple gifts; they are just good at lots of things. Take Laura Axelrod, for example. Laura is an accomplished writer, filmmaker and actor and has honed her talents over the years in many places but now she's in Cullman – to stay.

"I was born and raised in Connecticut," Axelrod began. "I have lived in many places throughout the U.S., including New York City, San Francisco and Austin, Texas. I met my husband, Greg Richter, through our mutual love of blogging," she smiled. "Even though we were two very different people, we still enjoyed reading each other's thoughts. We started dating while I was in Austin. So we had to travel over 800 miles to date, since he was in Cullman. Despite the hassle, it was worth it and we were married in 2008."

When Laura was in high school, she auditioned at a performing arts school in Hartford, Conn. and was accepted into their acting program. During that time, she also worked as an actress in a theatre group that toured

New England. Once she realized there weren't many good parts for women, she decided to become a dramatic writer.

"I went to college at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts for Dramatic Writing," she explained.

"Originally, I wanted to be a filmmaker but I got sidetracked by a love of theatre. I started working at Circle Repertory Company, an off-Broadway theatre company. They taught me how to be a stage manager. From there, I went to work on other shows in New York."

She stayed with theatre for many years. Her plays have been produced in California, New York and even in Europe.

"I also acted, though it wasn't a top priority for me at the time," she grinned.

"Greg got me back into filmmaking. He is also a writer, photographer and film editor," she continued.

"I am a writer and director. My primary influence is retro TV shows. I love watching Jim Rockford and Quincy, All in the Family, Mary Tyler Moore, Barney Miller and That Girl. Some of the storytelling seems so basic and simple, yet compelling at the same time."

Throughout her career, Laura has experienced many ups and downs. There aren't very many women in the

filmmaking scene, so she has had to work hard to get to where she is. When asked what she thought her greatest accomplishment was, her answer was quite surprising.

"My career has always been important to me, but as I get older, I realize that life is really about having a positive impact on other people," she said. "One of the last things my father told me before he died was that helping other people was his greatest accomplishment. Nothing else mattered in the end. So I think my greatest accomplishment might be those small moments when I can provide comfort or assistance to others."

Helping others is a top priority for Laura and even while being interviewed, she couldn't help but offer a few words of wisdom to teenagers who are considering becoming filmmakers and actors.

"I would tell young people to take good care of yourselves, emotionally and financially," she said on a more serious note.

"It is important to learn how to deal with success as well as rejection. Having a big ego can ruin your work as well as your career. I've watched some people handle success very badly," she frowned.

"Also, understand how to handle money and finances. If you have to work 60 hours a



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Laura Axelrod has lived in several cities across the country but is now in Cullman to stay.

week at your day job to finance your art, you will likely burn out. Finally, there are so many tools on the Internet. You would be amazed at the networking opportunities and technology that are free and easy to use. The old ways of moving to a big city, starting your career and paying your dues are all being redefined

because of the Internet," she finished warmly.

For more information about Laura Axelrod visit LauraAxelrod.com.

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