

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE **Current**

March 23, 1999

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Photos available on request_UCSB PROFESSORS WIN PRIZES FOR SOUTHWEST BOOKS

At the borders between countries, where currents of culture meet like great rivers, eddies and whirlpools of subculture spring up that make the middle region just over each side of the line unique unto itself.

Thus it is with Northern Mexico and the American Southwest.

And two UC Santa Barbara Chicano Studies professors who have written about the lands and people just north and south of the border recently were honored for their work.

Mario Garcia and Maria Herrera-Sobek have received Southwest Book Awards from the Border Region Library Association (BRLA)

"for literary excellence and enrichment of the cultural heritage of the Southwest."

Garcia was honored for his book, "The Making of a Mexican American Mayor: Raymond L. Telles of El Paso."

It is Garcia's fourth Southwest Book Award.

Herrera-Sobek was recognized for her work -- with co-editor David Maciel of Cal State Dominguez Hills -- on "Culture Across Borders: Mexican Immigration and Popular Culture."

Garcia, a Mexican-American native of El Paso, was a seventh-grade student in 1957 when Telles became the first person of Mexican descent elected mayor of a major Southwestern city.

Garcia later attended Cathedral High School, Telles' alma mater.

"I remember feeling

pride that a Mexican-American was mayor of the city and that he also came from my school," Garcia said.

"I think Telles inspired boys of my age to believe that we could also accomplish our goals in life."

Later, President John F. Kennedy appointed Telles U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica.

"I remember also feeling proud of this and being inspired to believe that I might also become a diplomat ...," Garcia said.

"I never became that diplomat, but instead, a historian who would ... write the biography of Ambassador Telles."

Herrera-Sobek's book addresses the depiction of Mexican immigration in popular culture on both sides of the border and includes chapters on art, film, literature, music and humor.

"The border seems to be an area very rich in creativity," Herrera-Sobek said.

"There is so much humanity going back and forth, so much human suffering and human happiness, it seems to release the creative juices."

Mary Sarber, a member of the BRLA committee that made the awards, called the book "a unique contribution to border studies."

The BRLA is made up of library officials and other interested parties in the borderlands of Texas and New Mexico, Sonora and Chihuahua.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.