

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE *Current*

October 22, 2014

[Andrea Estrada](#)

Author and Human Rights Activist to Receive UCSB's Annual Leal Award

Author Stella Pope Duarte is this year's recipient of UC Santa Barbara's Luis Leal Award for Distinction in Chicano/Latino Literature. The award will be presented during a ceremony at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 29, in the McCune Conference Room, 6020 Humanities and Social Science Building. The event is free and open to the public.

Duarte is the author of the highly praised novels "Let Their Spirits Dance and "If I Die in Juárez," as well as two collections of short stories — "Fragile Nights" and "Women Who Live in Coffee Shops and Other Stories."

"Stella Pope Duarte is a powerful writer about Mexican American barrio life in the Southwest and about the role of women in Chicano culture," said Mario T. García, professor of Chicana and Chicano studies and of history at UCSB, and the organizer of the annual Leal Award.

A graduate of Arizona State University, Duarte is the recipient of numerous awards and honors. Her novel "If I Die in Juárez" earned a 2009 American Book Award and a Pulitzer Prize nomination. It won the Southwest Book of the Year Award in the Top Pick category, and was named the Arizona Book of the Year in the category of Best in Popular Fiction. The novel also garnered the Foreword Book of the Year award and the Independent Publisher's Book of the Year award, as well as receiving an honorable mention in the International Latino Book Awards.

Duarte's novel "Let Their Spirits Dance" was nominated to Oprah's Book Sense List and received the AZ Highways Fiction Award. It also was nominated for ONEBOOKAz, a statewide project aimed at promoting literacy and fostering a sense of community.

In 2008, Duarte earned first prize in the 34th Annual Chicano/Latino Literary Prize from UC Irvine for her short story collection "Women Who Live in Coffee Shops and Other Stories."

Born in and raised in the Sonorita Barrio in South Phoenix, Duarte is a recipient of the Women In American History award from the Daughters of the American Revolution, and in 2013 was selected to be part of the Public Broadcasting System's production "Makers: Women Who Make America." Twice awarded creative writing fellowships from the Arizona Commission on the Arts, Duarte is also the author of "Writing Through Revelations, Visions and Dreams: The Memoir of a Writer's Soul."

The Leal Award is named in honor of Luis Leal, a professor emeritus of Chicana and Chicano Studies at UCSB, who was internationally recognized as a leading scholar of Chicano and Latino literature. Previous award recipients of the award include Demetria Martínez, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Graciela Limón, Pat Mora, Alejandro Morales, Helena Maria Viramontes, Oscar Hijuelos, Rudolfo Anaya, Denise Chávez, Hector Tobar and John Rechy.

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.