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[Andrea Estrada](#)

Author and Poet Pat Mora to Receive Luis Leal Literature Award

Poet and author Pat Mora will receive the 2008 Luis Leal Award for Distinction in Chicano/Latino Literature at the Santa Barbara Book & Author Festival on Saturday, September 27. Sponsored by UC Santa Barbara and the Santa Barbara Book Council, the annual award will be presented at a 3:30 p.m. ceremony in the Faulkner Gallery of the Santa Barbara Main Library.

A champion of children's literacy programs, Mora is the author of several award-winning children's books, including "Here Kitty, Kitty!/Ven gatita, ven!"; English and Spanish editions of "Grandparents"; and the forthcoming "Wiggling Pockets/Los bolsillos se menean." In addition, she is the founder of the family literacy initiative El día de los niños/El día de los libros (Children's Day/Book Day). Known as Día, the event emphasizes the importance of advocating literacy for children of all linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

"Pat Mora is a truly exceptional writer who embodies the very essence of the Leal Award -- recognized excellence and commitment to one's community," said Mario T. García, professor of Chicana and Chicano studies and history at UCSB and the organizer of the annual Leal Award.

The Luis Leal Award for Distinction in Chicano/Latino Literature is named for Luis Leal, a professor of Chicana and Chicano Studies at UCSB, who is internationally recognized as one of the leading scholars of Chicano and Latino literature. Previous

award recipients include Oscar Hijuelos, Rudolfo Anaya, Denise Chávez, María Elena Viramontes, and Alejandro Morales.

In her adult fiction and non-fiction, Mora writes about the Mexican American experience not only as a contemporary phenomenon but also as the culmination of centuries-old values, languages, and customs. Her work includes "Nepantia: Essays from the Land in the Middle," in which she explores the personal issues and political responsibilities she faces as a woman of color in the United States; and "House of Houses," a family memoir told in the voices of her ancestors. Among her collections of poetry are "Agua Santa: Holy Water"; "Adobe Odes"; "Communion"; "Aunt Carmen's Book of Practical Saints"; "Borders"; and "Chants."

Born in El Paso, Texas, Mora earned her bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Texas, El Paso. She also has received honorary doctorate degrees from North Carolina State University and the State University of New York. Her numerous awards include the 2006 National Hispanic Cultural Center Literary Award; the Southwest Book Award; the Aztlán Award; and a National Leadership Award from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. In addition, she has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, the latter of which enabled her to work in Umbria, Italy.

For more information, contact the Santa Barbara Book & Author Festival at (805) 966 1442 or visit the event Web site at www.sbbookfestival.org

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[Pat Mora](#)

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