

UCSD to Present Monthlong César E. Chávez Celebration

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Jan Jennings

The life and accomplishments of César E. Chávez, labor leader and champion of human rights, will be observed with a monthlong series of diverse activities beginning April 2 and continuing through May 7 at the University of California, San Diego. All events are free and open to the public.

Chávez would have celebrated his 80th birthday March 31. He died in 1993.

The principal figure in the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, Chávez was a leader in the struggle for working families and an advocate for non-violent solutions, dignity, and respect for all. His contributions have inspired UCSD presentations on the history, present, and future of Chicana/o communities.

Activities honoring the Chicano civil rights leader during the celebration will include a discussion on activism, a kickoff luncheon honoring local activists, films, a cultural celebration, programs on the struggles of undocumented immigrants and undocumented students, a celebration of Chicano Park, and a special lecture exploring contemporary trends in politics and culture in Mexico.

On April 2, prior to the April 3 kickoff luncheon, activist and author Enriqueta Vasquez will speak on *Chicana Activism During the Viet Nam War Era* at 3 p.m. in the UCSD Cross-Cultural Center. Vasquez was a major figure in the Chicano Movement of the late 1960s and the 1970s. Professors Dionne Espinoza of California State University, Los Angeles and Lorena Oropeza of UC Davis will comment.

The annual *César E. Chávez Celebration Kickoff Luncheon* will be from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 3 in UCSD's Institute of the Americas. UCSD alumnus Victor Nieblas and San Diego activist Olivia Puentes-Reynolds will be recognized for their work furthering the ideals of Chávez in their communities.

On April 4, the film, *The Invisible Mexicans of Deer Canyon*, will be screened at 6 p.m. in Garren Auditorium. The film explores the conditions that thousands of undocumented immigrants endure as they work to maintain the homes and businesses of the affluent in San Diego. Accompanying the film is a photo display from the UCSD Latino Medical Student Association and the Migrant Farmworker Project.

Another film, *Crossing Arizona*, will be screened at 5 p.m. April 12 in the Price Center Theater. The film reveals the political stances people take when immigration and border policy fails. It was nominated as the best documentary at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival. A discussion with the film director/producer Dan DeViva follows the screening.

On April 17, Rudy Guevarra, UCSD professor of history, will speak on *Mabuhay Companero: Interethnic Coalitions, 1920s - 1960s* at noon at the Cross-Cultural Center. Guevarra will explore the historical connections between the Mexican and Pilipino laborers of the agricultural fields of California which led to their work together in the 1960s to organize for economic justice.

The program, *Truth and Beauty in Mexico & Latin America* will be presented at 7 p.m. April 24 in the Price Center Ballroom. The speaker will be Alma Guillermoprieto, who has emerged as one of today's most informed and admired writers on Central and South America. The first recipient of the Samuel Chavkin Prize for Integrity in Latin American journalism, she has been the *New Yorker*'s Latin American correspondent for almost two decades. During the event, the UCSD Chicano/Latino Alumni Association will award two scholarships. The event is sponsored by the Helen Edison Lecture Series.

Other activities in the monthlong salute to César E. Chávez, which has been organized by the 2007 César E. Chávez Celebration Planning Committee, include:

The 29th Annual César E. Chávez Commemorative Community Breakfast, 7 a.m., April 2, San Diego Convention Center. The event will honor the Chávez legacy in the San Diego region and will recognize high school essay winners in the San Diego, Imperial, and Orange counties.

Undocumented Students at UCSD will be addressed at 6 p.m. April 6 at the Cross-Cultural Center. Considered will be the social, political, and educational conditions confronting undocumented students.

Teatro de las Chicanas will feature actors who worked with Chávez in the 1970s to create a politically engaged theater company. The discussion will begin with a reception at 4 p.m., followed by the program at 5 p.m. April 9 at the Cross-Cultural Center. A skit will be included.

The 29th Annual Thurgood Marshall College Cultural Celebration will be featured at the college from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 14. It will include music, dance, food, and art from around the world.

Jorge Mariscal, director of the UCSD Chicana/o-Latina/o Arts and Humanities Program, is chairing the 2007 César E. Chávez Celebration Planning Committee. For further information call the UCSD Cross-Cultural Center at (858) 534-9689.

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