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Master Storyteller and UC San Diego Alumnus Luis Alberto Urrea to Speak at UC San Diego Library

Tickets for annual literary gala, featuring award-winning novelist and activist, on sale now

The UC San Diego Library will celebrate 15 years of *Dinner in the Library*, its signature fundraising event for lovers of libraries and books, with San Diego-raised novelist and UC San Diego alumnus, Luis Alberto Urrea '77 on Friday, Sept. 21 from 6-9:30 p.m. A 2005 Pulitzer Prize finalist, Urrea has been hailed by NPR as a “master storyteller with a rock and roll heart.” For decades, he has written about the border and knits together stories in a way that makes them familiar and impactful to all readers.



Hosted at the heart of UC San Diego in the iconic Geisel Library, the evening will feature a cocktail reception where guests can enjoy panoramic views from the 8th floor, mingle with other bibliophiles, and learn from undergraduate students about their award-winning research projects. Following Urrea’s address during dinner, guests will have the opportunity to interact with the prolific author at a dessert reception.

Proceeds from the event will support the Geisel Library Revitalization Initiative (GLRI), an effort to transform the interior public spaces of Geisel Library to better meet the ever-changing information needs of the campus. Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla will match gifts raised up to \$1 million, doubling the impact of donations.

“We’re delighted that this year’s *Dinner in the Library* will commemorate the completion of the newly renovated 8th floor,” said Chancellor Khosla. “This modern reading room and signature event space showcase how a revitalized Library will continue to inspire knowledge, break tradition and spark discovery by enhancing the student experience and enriching our campus community.”

The renovation of Geisel Library’s top floor marks the culmination of Phase 2 of the GLRI, which began in 2015 with a lead gift from Audrey Geisel and the construction of Audrey’s Café on Geisel Library’s 2nd (main) floor. With additional support from alumni and friends, the GLRI will ensure that Geisel

Library is as inspiring inside as it is on the outside.

Urrea was born in Mexico, living the first part of his youth in Tijuana before moving to San Diego in the 1950s. Similar to other writers, he got his start in literature writing poems to impress girls in junior high. His early heroes were all rock stars, but not being musically inclined Urrea chose to follow in the steps of his literary role models. Even though Urrea's UC San Diego journey began as a theater major, it was the Department of Literature that ultimately led him to graduation day. Today, Urrea is most recognized as a border writer, though he says, "I am more interested in bridges, not borders."

"Urrea found his passion for creative writing during his senior year at UC San Diego with the help of a supportive professor," said Erik Mitchell, The Audrey Geisel University Librarian. "I am excited to have him back at UC San Diego for *Dinner in the Library* and look forward to hearing his inspiring story."

Urrea's newest book, "The House of Broken Angels," described as an "epic, rambunctious and highly entertaining" saga by The New York Times, paints a powerful and unforgettable portrait of a Mexican-American family and the American dream. "The Devil's Highway," his nonfiction account of a group of Mexican immigrants lost in the Arizona desert, won the Lannan Literary Award and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. His highly acclaimed historical novels "The Hummingbird's Daughter" and "Queen of America" together tell the epic story of his father's aunt, Teresita Urrea, who was a healer and Mexican folk hero. "The Devil's Highway," "The Hummingbird's Daughter" and his novel "Into the Beautiful North" have collectively been chosen by different cities and colleges across the nation for community-wide reading programs. In 2012, "Into the Beautiful North" was the One Book, One San Diego selection. In 2017, the novel was adapted in a production and was performed in theaters across the U.S. That same year, Urrea won an American Academy of Arts and Letters Fiction Award and his collection of short stories, "The Water Museum," was a finalist for the 2016 PEN/Faulkner Award and was named a best book of the year by The Washington Post among other publications.

Sponsors of the 2018 *Dinner in the Library* include Audrey S. Geisel/The San Diego Foundation/Dr. Seuss Fund and local philanthropist Jeanne Jones who is serving in her third term as chair of the *Dinner in the Library* Honorary Committee, among others.

To purchase tickets or to learn more about sponsorship opportunities, please visit lib.ucsd.edu/dinner or call (858) 534-7021.

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