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Contact: Jo Ann Lloyd
Cal Poly Public Affairs
(805) 756-6530; jllloyd@calpoly.edu

Cal Poly Professor Chosen San Luis Obispo's Eighth Poet Laureate

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly Modern Languages and Literatures Professor and award-winning writer Gloria Velasquez has been named San Luis Obispo's eighth poet laureate.

Her poetry has been published in two volumes, "I Used to Be a Superwoman" and, her latest, "Xicana on the Run," which she will read from on Nov. 13 during the 22nd annual San Luis Obispo Poetry Festival. She will read at 6:30 p.m. at the San Luis Obispo Art Center at 1010 Broad S., downtown.

In addition to her poetry, Velasquez is also well known for her Roosevelt High School Series of young adult novels. The books focus on a group of multiracial teenagers who are confronted with a variety of social and cultural issues such as violence, sexuality, teen pregnancy and prejudice.

Velasquez's seventh novel in the RHS series, "Tyrone's Journey," features an African American teenager. The book is expected to be published in fall 2006.

The Loveland, Colo., native has been recognized with numerous awards and honors. She was included in an article titled "100 History-Making Ethnic Women," published by Linworth Publishing Inc.

Stanford University, where she earned a Ph.D. in 1985 in Latin American and Chicano literatures, recently archived her writings, alongside those of John Steinbeck.

She is also a featured artist in the PBS documentary "La Raza de Colorado." Part one of the documentary aired in June, and part two, in which Velasquez is featured with other Xicana artists, will be shown in November.

Velasquez, of San Luis Obispo, has been teaching Chicano literature and culture at Cal Poly since 1985.

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Cal Poly Public Affairs
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
805.756.7266
polynews@calpoly.edu