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California Polytechnic State University

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **United Farm Workers Co-Founder Dolores Huerta To Speak at Cal Poly April 10**

Dolores Huerta, co-founder and first vice president emeritus of the United Farm Workers of America, will speak on her role in the history of the UFW at 7 p.m. April 10 in Chumash Auditorium in Cal Poly's University Union.

Eric Chavez, grandson of UFW co-founder Cesar Chavez and a Cal Poly alumnus, will give an introduction.

Huerta began her career as a grammar school teacher after earning a teaching degree from the University of Pacific's Delta Community College. She left teaching because, according to a biography on the United Farm Workers' Web site, she "couldn't stand seeing kids come to class hungry and needing shoes. I thought I could do more by organizing farm workers than by trying to teach their hungry children."

In 1962 Chavez and Huerta formed the National Farm Workers Association, the predecessor to the UFW.

The following year, through her lobbying efforts, Huerta was instrumental in securing Aid For Dependent Families for the unemployed and underemployed, and disability insurance for California farm workers.

Huerta still works for the UFW and travels across North America promoting "La Causa" (the farm workers' cause) and women's rights. She and Chavez founded the Robert F. Kennedy Medical Plan, the Juan De La Cruz Farm Worker Pension Fund, and the Farm Workers Credit Union -- the first medical and pension plans and credit union for farm workers.

As an advocate for farm worker rights, Huerta has been arrested more than 20 times for peaceful union activities.

In 1993 Dolores was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.

She received the American Civil Liberties Union Roger Baldwin Medal of Liberty Award, the Eugene V. Debs Foundation Outstanding American Award, and the Ellis Island Medal of Freedom Award.

In 1984 the California state senate bestowed upon her the Outstanding Labor Leader Award.

In 1998 Ms. Magazine named her one of three Women of the Year, and the Ladies Home Journal listed her as one of 100 Most Important Women of the 20th Century.

She currently serves as secretary-treasurer of the United Farm Workers, vice president for the Coalition for Labor Union Women, and vice president of the California AFL-CIO.

Huerta has received honorary doctorates from the New College of San Francisco, San Francisco State University, and the State University of New York campus at New Palz.

The public is invited to the free lecture, presented by Cal Poly's Ethnic Studies Department and co-sponsored by El Corral Bookstore, the Kennedy Library, Multicultural Programs and Services, Research and Graduate Programs, the Vice President for Academic Affairs office, the Political Science Department, the Student Affairs division and the California Faculty Association.

For more information, call Ethnic Studies at 756-1707.

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