

COLUMN

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Library gets prize manuscript

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Daily Lobo guest columnist

Rudolfo Anaya is hailed as the first person to write about coming-of-age from the Chicano perspective with his 1972 book, *Bless Me, Ultima*. Anaya and his wife, Patricia, have donated a number of original manuscripts to the special collections section of the Center for Southwest Research at Zimmerman Library. Anaya is a longtime Albuquerque resident and professor emeritus at UNM.

To celebrate the donation, the CSWR has mounted an exhibit at Zimmerman, "Escrituras y Homenaje: Rudolfo A. Anaya," which displays portions of the manuscripts, including *Bless Me, Ultima*, along with articles and translations of Anaya's work into Japanese, German, Italian and other languages. The exhibit will be on display through August 2004.

Anaya writes about New Mexico and experiences of Hispanics in the Southwest. The sometimes mystical tales handed down from generation to generation play a large part in his writing, which frequently focuses on oral traditions. His novels explore life in the urban envi-

General Library

ronment, and sometimes touch on the turbulence of politics and public events in Albuquerque.

Anaya has the special perspective of growing up in rural New Mexico. Born in 1937, in the small village of Las Pasturas, New Mexico, he was the fifth of seven children. His family moved to the area near Santa Rosa when he was young, and his first and best known novel *Bless Me, Ultima* deals in part with the collision of a farming culture with the more nomadic life of vaqueros or ranch hands.

Library administrators are excited about the donation. Teresa Marquez, co-curator of the exhibit, was instrumental in putting together the donation and says Anaya was generous in allowing his manuscripts to be kept in Albuquerque since other libraries had offered to pay him generously for the material. She says "This donation is a gold mine to scholars interested in New Mexico writers and

Chicano literature. It will allow scholars to see how the manuscripts changed over time as Anaya worked on them."

Anaya has a long association with the University of New Mexico. He graduated from UNM in 1963 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, going on to teach in the Albuquerque Public Schools through the '60s. During that time, he also earned a Master of Arts degree in English in 1968 and a Master of Arts degree in Guidance and Counseling in 1972. He became a counselor at the University of Albuquerque briefly, joining the UNM faculty in 1974 where he taught in the Department of English until his retirement in 1993. He now has emeritus status at the University and continues to write from his home in Albuquerque.

Anaya's donation will allow scholars to explore the way he worked as he wrote and edited his novels. The donation contains letters between his publishers and Anaya, and successive versions of his work as he altered it and expanded it. The manuscripts are now being inventoried and catalogued. They should be available to researchers by early fall 2004.