



Contact: Joe Martin
530.754.5428

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<http://www.MondaviArts.org/pressroom>

For immediate release:

Campus Book Project Comes to Mondavi Center with Author Luis Alberto Urrea and *The Devil's Highway*

October 31, 2007; Davis, California—Acclaimed author **Luis Alberto Urrea**, whose book *The Devil's Highway* is the subject of the **UC Davis 2007-08 Campus Community Book Project**, will speak at the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts** on November 28. Urrea will discuss *The Devil's Highway*—a hard-hitting account of the real-life story of a group of illegal immigrants' journey across the Arizona desert—along with immigration-related issues, his career as a writer, and more in the Campus Community Book Project's culminating event.

The event will begin at 8 pm on November 28 in the Mondavi Center's Jackson Hall on the UC Davis campus. Tickets are available from the Mondavi Center Ticket Office at 530.754.ARTS (2787) or online at www.MondaviArts.org. The special event is presented as part of the 2007-08 Campus Community Book Project, a series of lectures, film showings, and other events designed to examine issues discussed in the *Devil's Highway*. For a listing of other Book Project events, please visit <http://occr.ucdavis.edu/ccbp2007/events.html>.

The critically acclaimed author of 11 books, Luis Alberto Urrea (whose last name is pronounced “oo-RAY-ah”) is an award-winning poet and essayist, a 2005 Pulitzer Prize finalist, and a member of the Latino Literature Hall of Fame. *The Devil's Highway*, his 2004 non-fiction account of a group of Mexican immigrants' attempt to cross the Arizona desert, was a national bestseller, won the 2004 Lannan Literary Award, and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the Pacific Rim Kiriyaama Prize. The work was named a best book of the year by the *Los Angeles Times*, *Miami Herald*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Kansas City Star*, and many other publications.

The Devil's Highway recounts the true story of a group of 26 men attempting to enter the United States illegally from Mexico. Lured by the promise of well-paying, temporary jobs in the U.S., the men paid a “coyote” to smuggle them to the forbidding expanse of land bordered by Interstate I-19 on the east, the Colorado River on the west; I-8 to the north, and Mexican Route 2 to the south. Several of the men died trying to cross the desert on foot. Urrea's book pieces together the story of their journey from interviews with survivors, their families, border patrol agents, and others.

Critics have hailed the book as a triumphant humanization of immigration issues. The *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote that, “If, like many of us...you sometimes forget just how much a matter it is of life and death for so many people around the world—but particularly those living south of the Rio Grande—to cross over

into this still vital land of plenty...*The Devil's Highway* will undoubtedly brace your soul and remind you that all of us, rich or poor, brown, white, black or yellow, whether from Veracruz or Gaza or Istanbul or Malibu or Oaxaca or Pacific Heights, are traveling through these parts for only a little while."

Born in Tijuana, Mexico, to a Mexican father and an American mother, Urrea attended the **University of California, San Diego**, earning an undergraduate degree in writing, and did his graduate studies at the **University of Colorado-Boulder**. After serving as a relief worker in Tijuana and a film extra and working as columnist, editor, and cartoonist for several publications, Urrea moved to Boston where he taught expository writing and fiction workshops at **Harvard University**. He has also taught at **Massachusetts Bay Community College** and the **University of Colorado**, and was writer in residence at the **University of Louisiana-Lafayette**.

Urrea's first book, *Across the Wire*, published in 1993, was named a *New York Times* Notable Book and won the Christopher Award. Urrea also won a 1999 American Book Award for his memoir, *Nobody's Son: Notes from an American Life*, and in 2000, he was voted into the Latino Literature Hall of Fame following the publication of *Vatos*, a book of poetry. His volume of short stories, *Six Kinds of Sky*, was named the 2002 small-press Book of the Year in fiction by the editors of *ForeWord* magazine. He has also won a Western States Book Award in poetry for *The Fever of Being* and was in the 1996 Best American Poetry collection. His most recent book, *The Hummingbird's Daughter*, is a historical novel that tells the story of Teresa Urrea, sometimes known as "the Saint of Cabora" and "the Mexican Joan of Arc."

"Immigration is a core issue for our state and our society, and Luis Alberto Urrea's *The Devil's Highway* is an astute choice for the 2007 Campus Community Book Project," said **Don Roth**, the Mondavi Center's executive director. "We look forward to presenting this fine author's lecture as part of our community's discussion of his book and the issues it examines."

What: Luis Alberto Urrea
The Devil's Highway
When: Wednesday, November 28 • 8 PM
Where: Jackson Hall
Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts
University of California, Davis
Admission: \$33/\$29/\$25 Adults • \$16.50/\$14.50/\$12.50 Students & Children
Tickets/Info: 530.754.ARTS (2787)
866.754.ARTS (toll-free)
<http://www.MondaviArts.org>
530.754.5402 [TDD]

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