

Sandra Cisneros

Sandra Cisneros is a writer whose exuberant prose and spirited activism have made her one of literature's best-loved figures. Among the first Latinas ever published by a major house, she has tackled subjects such as race, class, border-crossing and feminism with empathy and a language that is unique in American letters. Her debut novel, "The House on Mango Street," sold more than six million copies, was translated into more than 20 languages, and has become required reading in high schools and colleges across the United States. Subsequent endeavors and acclaim elevated Cisneros into a cultural icon. She has published in every genre, including the poetry collections "My Wicked, Wicked Ways (1987) and "Loose Woman" (1994); the 1991 short story collection "Woman Hollering Creek"; the 1994 dual-language children's book "Hairs/Pelitos"; the 2002 novel "Caramelo"; and the 2012 picture book for adults "Have You Seen Marie?" Library Journal deemed her latest book, "A House of My Own," the best memoir of 2015. Although storytelling is her chief pursuit, Cisneros doesn't just nurture the artist within. Soon after the MacArthur Foundation awarded her a Genius Grant in 1995, she established the Macondo Foundation, which champions writers around the world who share her commitment to social justice. In addition to holding workshops and readings, the Macondo also offers financial support for artists "in need of time to heal their body, heart or spirit." She also organized her fellow Latina-Latino "MacArturos" into an ongoing group of doers who meet regularly to inspire communities in need.

Cisneros' honors include an Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, a Lannan Foundation Literary Award, an American Book Award, two National Endowment for the Arts fellowships and a Texas Medal for the Arts. When she won UNC's prestigious Thomas Wolfe Prize in 2014, more than 600 readers gathered from across the Triangle for her keynote address.

For outstanding accomplishment in the field of creative writing, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is pleased to confer on Sandra Cisneros the degree of Doctor of Letters honoris causa.