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Carlos Fuentes, World Famous Writer and Cultural Ambassador, to Speak at UD

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CARLOS FUENTES, WORLD FAMOUS WRITER AND CULTURAL AMBASSADOR, TO SPEAK AT UD

DAYTON, Ohio -- Internationally acclaimed writer and diplomat Carlos Fuentes will kick off the University of Dayton's 1993-94 Distinguished Speakers Series on Sept. 29 with a lecture, "An Evening with Carlos Fuentes." Free and open to the public, the presentation will begin at 8 p.m. in UD's Frericks Athletic and Convocation Center.

One of Mexico's foremost writers, Fuentes has won numerous literary awards for his novels, short stories, plays and essays. He also served as Mexico's ambassador to France and is a member of the Mexican National Commission on Human Rights.

"Part of his mission as a writer and speaker is to enable us to understand other cultures," said Janis Krugh, an assistant professor of languages at UD who is teaching a course on Fuentes this semester. "He's very conscious of promoting cultural understanding."

Born in Mexico in 1928, Fuentes spent his childhood in Washington, D.C., where his father served as a counselor in the Mexican Embassy. He lived in Argentina and Chile as well as Mexico during his teens. After receiving a law degree from Mexico's National University, he studied international law at the University of Geneva in Switzerland.

He combined his broad cultural and linguistic background with a keen interest in literature to produce writings that illuminated the complex ties among nations. His fictional works span numerous genres, ranging from political spy thrillers to dream histories of the Spanish-speaking world.

"My upbringing taught me that cultures are not isolated, and perish when deprived of contact with what is different and challenging," Fuentes wrote in "How I Started to Write," an essay in the collection Myself with Others. "Reading, writing, teaching, learning, all are activities aimed at introducing civilizations to each other. No culture... retains its identity in isolation; identity is attained in contact, in contrast, in breakthrough."

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Fuentes has held several diplomatic posts, among them the position of Mexico’s ambassador to France from 1975 to 1977. He has received numerous honorary degrees from American universities, including Harvard, where he inaugurated the Robert F. Kennedy Chair in Latin American Studies. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and is a trustee of the New York Public Library.

"He is a figure of great renown who unifies the humanities," said Krugh, adding that his fiction and essays bring together history, religion, philosophy, and to some extent social and political sciences.

"An Evening with Carlos Fuentes" is sponsored by the Distinguished Speakers Series, the William S. Anderson International Forum and numerous UD departments. The lecture also is one of more than two dozen UD events scheduled throughout the year to celebrate the opening of the Jesse Philips Humanities Center.

The next Distinguished Speakers address will be given by actor Ed Asner on Oct. 14.

For more information on the Fuentes address, call (513) 229-3333.

For more information on the literature of Carlos Fuentes, contact Janis Krugh at (513) 229-2431. For information on the Distinguished Speakers Series, call (513) 229-3333. For other details, call Candace Stuart at (513) 229-3257.