



El Noticiero

Newsletter of the New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education

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February, 2007

Dr. Donalddo Macedo and Dr. Kathy Escamilla will Keynote NMABE Conference in April, 2007

Dr. Kathy Escamilla, Professor of Education at the University of Colorado, Boulder is a nationally recognized expert and passionate advocate for the proper education of English Language Learners and for quality Bilingual Education.

Her research centers on educational issues related to Spanish speaking language minority students in U.S. schools. She is specifically interested in issues related to the development of bilingualism and biliteracy in early elementary grades for this Spanish speaking population. In her recent research she has also examined assessment practices and the impact of high stakes testing on these children.

She has over 32 years of experience in the field of bilingual/ESL education. Her range of experience includes bilingual elementary instruction, bilingual Head Start instruction, Director of Bilingual Programs and professor of bilingual education at the university level.

She is the author of *Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial*, which is a reconstruction of English Reading Recovery into Spanish. The book is in its third printing. Kathy has authored over 32 publications in research journals and book chapters. For the past 4 years she has been involved in research on the impact of the Colorado Student Assessment Program on Colorado children who are learning English as a second language.



dedicated to social justice for Spanish speaking children and their families in U.S. schools.

Kathy is active in the bilingual/ESL community in the United States. She served two terms as the President of the National Association for Bilingual Education. Recently she was appointed to the National Panel for Early Literacy and the national Hispanic Advisory Council for the National Center for Family Literacy.

Her life's work and passion is

Dr. Donalddo Macedo is a full professor of English and a Distinguished Professor of Liberal Arts and Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston. He is the Graduate Program Director of the Applied Linguistics Masters of Arts Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston.



He has received many awards and recognitions for his achievements among which is one of the most prestigious awards in education -- the Laureate Chapter of the Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education. Others who have received this award include Albert Einstein, John Dewey, Margaret Mead, Jean Piaget, to name a few. This international award recognizes the Applied Linguistics Graduate Program Director's long list of scholarly contributions and the influence of his work in the United States and around the world. Macedo has been published not only in English but Cape Verdean, Greek, Portuguese, and Spanish. He has co-written a number of books and articles with influential world-renowned thinkers like Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, and Paulo Freire. Macedo is known as the leading Freirean scholar.

He has published extensively in the areas of linguistics, critical literacy, and bilingual and multicultural education. His publications include: *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World* (with Paulo Freire, 1987), *Literacies of Power: What Americans Are Not Allowed to Know* (1994), *Dancing With Bigotry* (with Lilia Bartolome, 1999), *Critical Education in the New Information Age* (with Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux and Paul Willis, 1999), *Chomsky on Miseducation* (with Noam Chomsky, 2000), *The Hegemony of English* (with Bessie Dendrinis and Panayota Gounari, 2003), *Howard Zinn on Democratic Education* (with Howard Zinn, 2004), and *Ideology Matters* (co-authored with Paulo Freire, forthcoming).

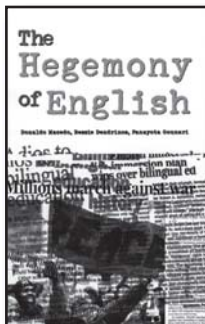
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Continued on page 2



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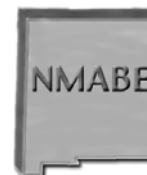
*To receive discount enter code "NMBA07". Offer good through June, 2007.

Highlands Announces Summer Immersion Institute

New Mexico Highlands University's *Programa de Español Intensivo para Maestros Bilingües* will take place June 3-10 on the main campus in Las Vegas. This is an intensive review for the "Prueba..." exam required for bilingual endorsement. The stay in the dorm is an essential part of this full immersion experience. For further information contact Dr. Loretta Salazar at NMHU at 505-454-3535 or email lsalazar@nmhu.edu

Continued from page 1

significant discount to purchase Dr. Macedo's book *The Hegemony of English*. (See above ad.) "In this book I discuss the political factors that have unleashed a vicious attack on immigrants, and language remains the last refuge that one can be openly racist without much repercussion. If fact, denying people access to their language and culture is presented as a positive step that it's for their own good." said Dr. Macedo.



El Noticiero

El Noticiero is published quarterly with monthly inserts by *Language Magazine* and provides information on current affairs concerning the education of language minority persons in New Mexico and the United States.

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PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

- No. 31:1, Fall, 2006: October
(Pre-conference issue)
- No. 31:2, Winter, 2007: January
(Board News, Bilingual Education Day, Call to Action)
- No. 31:3 Spring, 2007: April
(Conference Edition)
- No. 31:4 Summer, 2007: August
(Summer Activities, Institutes)

Monthly news as well

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NMABE State Bilingual Education Conference

April 26-28, 2007
Embassy Suites Hotel
Albuquerque, New Mexico

for more information visit our site at www.nmabe.net

New Mexico Loses Bilingual Education Pioneer

Mela Leger, early pioneer of bilingual education passed away on December 31, 2006 at her home in Albuquerque, New Mexico

Mela was involved in bilingual education from its inception and remained involved all of her life. She was a quiet, kind, compassionate and committed individual who understood the power of politics and bilingual education. She never hesitated to contact our national and local representatives to garner their support when issues ran against the program. She was loved and respected by many.

She was one of a handful of educators nationwide to pilot test and participate in the national debate and development of curriculum for bilingual children. She started and ran a fully bilingual, multi-cultural elementary school, which was visited by policy makers and educators from Washington D.C. and every state with a sizable bilingual population.

In the mid 1960's Mela used the Miami Linguistic Readers, the first-ever pilot reading program designed to teach English to Spanish-speaking children. She collaborated with state leaders early on and traveled to various school districts to meet with parents and convince them that bilingual education was a good thing for their children.

She helped write the 1973 Bilingual Education Act and was named to the initial state bilingual advisory committee of what was then the State Department of Education. In this capacity she helped write the guidelines for the program and frame the first-ever certification criteria in the nation for teachers of bilingual education and English as a second language. She remained on the committee until 1998. She urged the Department to include bilingual education as part of the state's Educational Standards for New Mexico Schools, an inclusion we accept today as the norm. She also supported the concept of a creating a proficiency exam in Spanish for certifying teachers in bilingual education, knowing that without proficiency a quality education through two languages was

meaningless.

In the mid 70's she directed the Las Vegas Teacher Training Center, one of three such centers established by the Legislature, and trained the first cadre of bilingual education teachers in the state. These centers provided demonstration classes and in-service training in bilingual education for teachers and aides in the early bilingual programs. Teachers received one week of intensive training observing instruction with the Miami Linguistics ESL



Photo from Leger Family Archive

and the Spanish Curricula Development Center (SCDC) instructional materials. Next, they gave a lesson using the materials, were filmed, and they then critiqued themselves. A follow-up visit by a specialist occurred one year later to see if the teachers had transferred the skills and concepts acquired in the Center to their classroom instruction. It was truly a marvelous model.

As a consultant with the Spanish Curricula Development Center (SCDC) during the same period, Mela helped field test language arts, math, science, social studies, and fine arts materials in New Mexico classrooms. She then traveled to Miami, Florida to meet with the curriculum writers

and discuss feedback from teachers that would make the materials more suitable to New Mexico students. Her participation in this project was crucial to the development of the materials. Leonila Serna, retired bilingual educator of Taos remembers meeting Mela in Miami. "I first met her as a Ford Foundation Fellow doing an internship at the SCDC center in Miami. She encouraged me to return to NM to help with the establishment of a bilingual program in Taos."

A founding member of NMABE, Mela stayed involved at the state level throughout her lifetime and intrinsically understood the issues. Dr. Paul Martínez, Director of the Center for Education and Study of Diverse Populations, remembers Mela in this way, "There is always a deeply felt sense of loss for me when an *anciano* passes. When one of our bilingual education pioneers dies however, it is even a more profound loss. Mela was an amazing person, I cannot ever remember one time that I spoke with her when she wasn't smiling or upbeat about our work and the students we serve. When I first returned to NM after living in Denver and Chicago, she was one of the first people along with Henry Pascual who welcomed me back and had *consejos* to share with me. She understood the political landscape as well as anybody I know. Our community not only in NM but nationally has lost an anchor, truly one of our pioneers."

She was like the cornerstone in the foundation of bilingual education in New Mexico—and then she continued to build on that foundation by helping prepare future teachers at the University of New Mexico and also as a teacher trainer with the Albuquerque Public Schools. She retired from UNM but not from her career as she then worked for Crane Publishing Company which formatted the SCDC materials into user-friendly student texts and teacher guides. After this work, she went back to UNM and worked in Hon-

Continued on page 4

President Signs Esther Martinez Native Languages Preservation Act

Act Preserves Heritage & Honors Life of Tewa Storyteller

WASHINGTON - The New Mexico Congressional Delegation announced that President Bush has signed into law the Esther Martinez Native Languages Preservation Act.

The new law helps prevent the loss of an important part of New Mexico's heritage, the Native American languages that are rapidly disappearing. The bill, written and introduced by Congresswoman Heather Wilson last year in February, was passed by the House in September and the Senate in December with the support of the entire New Mexico delegation.

"These languages will be preserved with attention and effort. Once lost, they will never be recovered," Wilson said. "The native languages were precious to Esther Martinez, and this bill is designed to help preserve them. It is a fitting tribute to her life's work."

"This bill is a tremendous way to honor the memory of Esther Martinez. It aims to preserve the unique linguistic heritage of Native Americans, and I'm pleased to see it be-

come law," said U.S. Senator Pete Domenici, who worked to ensure passage in the Senate.

"For many years, tribes were discouraged from speaking their native languages and now many languages have disappeared. This legislation will help ensure native languages are preserved, and passed on to future generations," U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman said.

"Considering Esther's dedication to preserving her native language, it is a fitting tribute that this legislation be named after her," said Rep. Tom Udall. "The urgent need to protect and preserve Native American languages is clear. We must invest in their preservation by implementing immersion programs. This legislation is an important step toward reversing the trend of disappearing native languages. I would like to congratulate Congresswoman Wilson on this legislation being signed into law, and thank her for her efforts on this important issue."

"This innovative and timely legislation helps stem an im-

pending tragedy for our nation; the rapid decline and potential loss of Native American languages," said Rep. Steve Pearce, also a co-sponsor of the legislation. "I commend Rep. Wilson for her leadership in reconnecting younger generations of Native Americans to the language and culture of their ancestors while preserving an irreplaceable treasure for every American."

The bill was designated in honor of Esther Martinez of New Mexico, following her death in September. On September 14, Esther Martinez of Ohkay Owingeh was awarded a National Heritage Fellowship in Washington, DC. She died at 94 years of age in Espanola en route home after attending a ceremony at the National Endowment for the Arts.

Sadly, only an estimated 20 of more than 300 pre-colonial indigenous languages will remain by the year 2050. In 1996, 175 of these languages remained, but now we're losing them at a rate of 12 languages every 3 years. New Mexico is home to 19 different pueblos and 3 tribes. Among the tribes and pueblos, there are six major

languages, plus varying dialects. Language is a key element of each community's identity.

A recent survey of Native languages found that among the Lipan Apache on the Mescalero reservation in southern New Mexico there are just ten speakers of the native language remaining. At the Sandia Pueblo, north of Albuquerque, most of their Native speakers are middle aged or older. Even Navajo, spoken more than any other Native Language in the U.S., is spoken fluently by less than half of the Navajo children entering kindergarten.

The bill authorizes competitive grants through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish Native American language "nests" for students under the age of seven and their families. It supports Native American language survival schools. It will help to preserve all the indigenous languages that are still being spoken, and increase the support for Native American language immersion programs to create fluent speakers, and allow tribes and pueblos to develop their own immersion programs.

Continued from page 3

duras and Bolivia and then continued teacher training and publishing part time till 2003 when, at 76, she finally decided that she had worked her last Bilingual Education Conference. Mela trained hundreds of teachers who impacted thousands of students.

Dr. Julia Rosa Emslie, NMABE President, had the following words for Mela. "Mela Leger was a great friend and great mentor. Her funeral mass was wonderful and moving. The Newman Center was packed with family and friends. At the cemetery, her son Steve played "Over the Rainbow" on his

trumpet. There was not a dry eye in the place. We then went to a wonderful reception with music, food, and laughter--just what Mela would have wanted."

At the cemetery, one of her granddaughters passed along something unforgettable that Mela had taught her as she was growing up, "My grandma told me this. When you educate a man, you educate an individual. When you educate a woman, you educate a family." The family of bilingual education will never forget the contributions Mela has made to New Mexico's teachers, parents, and children.