



Near South
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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[Printers Row Lit Fest](#)

Sandra Cisneros wins the 2025 Harold Washington Literary Award: Acclaimed Mexican American writer will deliver keynote address at the 40th annual Printers Row Lit Fest

April 16, 2025-(Chicago, IL)- Sandra Cisneros, world renowned poet, short story writer, novelist, and essayist, has been selected to receive the 2025 Harold Washington Literary Award (HWLA). The award, named for Chicago's first African American mayor, will be presented by the Near South Planning Board to Cisneros, a Mexican-American writer from Chicago who was instrumental in bringing attention to the Chicano literary movement of the 1980s and 1990s, at the annual HWLA dinner on September 4th.

"Even though I don't live in Chicago anymore, its stories still live in me," said Sandra Cisneros. "I am currently writing a novel, parts of which take place there. So, I am still telling those stories and I continue to call Chicago one of my hometowns. Therefore, it's a great honor to be receiving the Harold Washington Literary Award—which has been given to so many wonderful writers from all over—from my hometown," added Cisneros.

The HWLA dinner and presentation taking place at the Union League Club of Chicago will kick-off the 40th annual Printers Row Lit Fest, the Midwest's largest literary festival, getting underway on September 6th. In addition, the Chicago City Council will honor Cisneros by proclaiming September 4th as Sandra Cisneros Day.

Cisneros is perhaps best known for her groundbreaking novel-in-vignettes, "The House on Mango Street," a semi-autobiographical work inspired by her experiences growing up Latina and working class in a racially divided Chicago during the 1960s. The book has sold over seven million copies, been translated in more than 25 languages, and just celebrated its 40th anniversary. Besides "The House on Mango Street," another major work she authored is the short story collection, "Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories."

"Sandra Cisneros is a versatile and adventurous writer of profound compassion, exquisite imagination, sharp wit, valiant candor, and deep perception whose work is read and cherished the world over," says Booklist Editor in Chief and Adult Books Editor Donna Seaman. "She has illuminated with piercing insight and artistry the adversity facing girls and women, people of color, and immigrants. With her deep bonds to Chicago and her extraordinary generosity of spirit, Cisneros is the ideal recipient of the Harold Washington Literary Award. I couldn't be more jubilant over her

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Add 1/Cisneros is 2025 HWLA winner

acceptance of this richly deserved recognition, Chicago will celebrate!”

In addition to “The House on Mango Street,” she is the author of 14 books including most recently the poetry collection, “Woman Without Shame,” a meditation on female sexual agency and power. A foundational figure in Chicana Literature, Cisneros has created a body of work that spans genres and transcends boundaries.

“Sandra Cisneros’s writing is timeless, but it has never felt more-of-this-moment,” adds HWLA Selection Committee Co-Chair and co-founder of the Center for Story & Witness, Anne K. Ream. “She asks us to think in new ways about race, gender, class, and the pain of being treated as a stranger in one’s own land. And she reminds us that bearing narrative witness can be a powerful political act.”

An extraordinary literary talent who is also a devoted literary citizen, Cisneros has received numerous awards for her writing, including the National Medal of Arts, a MacArthur Fellowship, the Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award from the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation, and the PEN America’s PEN/Nabokov Award for Achievement in International Literature. Cisneros is also the founder of the Macondo Writers Workshop, through which she supports the development of a global community of activist writers and storytellers.

Cisneros will also be the keynote speaker at the Printers Row Lit Fest which will celebrate its 40th anniversary on Saturday, September 6 and Sunday, September 7, from 10am-6pm in Chicago’s historic Printers Row neighborhood. It will feature more than 70 live programs on 6 indoor and outdoor stages, over 100 independent booksellers, publishers, literary organizations, educational institutions, and much more. Admission to the book fair and literary programs is free. This year’s program and list of presenters, authors, and booksellers will be announced later this summer. For updated and additional information, please visit [Printers Row Lit Fest](http://www.printersrowlitfest.org). (www.printersrowlitfest.org).

About the Harold Washington Literary Award:

Since 1989, Chicago’s Near South Planning Board and The HWLA Selection Committee has annually awarded the HWLA to honor the first African American mayor of Chicago for his love of literature and who epitomized the diversity of the American experience. The HWLA Selection Committee of more than two dozen literary professionals that include authors, publishers, and editors determine the author selected to receive the annual award.

Past award recipients include: Ray Bradbury; Gwendolyn Brooks; Susan Sontag; Saul Bellow; Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.; E.L. Doctorow; Doris Kearns Goodwin; Ralph Ellison; Walter Mosely; Isabel Allende; Studs Terkel; and others. The complete list of award recipients is [here](#).

About the Near South Planning Board (NSPB):

Since 1946, NSPB, a nonprofit community development organization, has been planning, guiding, and encouraging sustainable economic development in Chicago’s near south side community. Besides the annual Printers Row Lit Fest, NSPB produces literary programs in Chicago Public Schools through its Authors in the Schools program and the HWLA. As one of the City of Chicago’s delegate agencies in the Neighborhood Business Development Center Program, NSPB provides resources, marketing, and the educational programs and services that attract, retain, and grow businesses and jobs. For more information, visit [NSPB](http://www.thenspb.org). (www.thenspb.org).