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NACCS Scholar Introduction - Hurtado

Inés Casillas

University of California, Santa Barbara, inescasillas@yahoo.com

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Introduction
NACCS Scholar Aida Hurtado
D. Inés Casillas

National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS)
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It is an honor today to introduce Aída Hurtado, former chair of the National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS); most recently, Past President of the American Psychological Association (APA) Division 35, Society for the Psychology of Women, Section 3 Concerns of Hispanic Women; and the President Elect of Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS). She is one of our field's most generous and inspiring scholar-activists. The nomination packet submitted for today's honor, compiled by Professor Felicity Amaya Schaeffer, includes letters of support from colleagues across the United States, from various academic disciplines, and different "ranks" within the academy. The hefty packet submitted reflects the respect and admiration so many of us have for her contributions, both in her writings and mentorship, to Chicana and Chicano Studies.

Professor Hurtado is a distinguished social psychologist and feminist theorist who currently holds the Luis Leal Endowed Professorship and is a faculty member in the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. UCSB successfully recruited her to move down the coast after twenty-seven years as a faculty member in the Department of Psychology and active affiliations with Feminist Studies and the Latin American and Latino Studies departments at the University of California, Santa Cruz. To say we were thrilled to have Professor Hurtado join us at UCSB would be an understatement. Her creative

intellectual energy has quickly become a centerpiece of our department. We often turn to her for her seasoned leadership, for her quick wit, no frills nonsense, and as the Golden (or Bronze) standard of excellence in research.

Professor Hurtado's research on Chicano and Latino families, Chicana feminisms, and most recently, on Latino male youth, is foundational, inspirational and, perhaps best characteristic of all her work, *relevant* to the social and political lives of so many Mexicano and Chicano communities. Her trove of research includes over 130 publications, including nine edited and non-edited books and monographs as well as 43 policy briefs and reports. Indeed, many of us were first introduced to a number of her books and essays as required readings in education, social psychology, ethnic studies, and feminist studies. Her writings travel and trespass across disciplinary boundaries; she has long been our unofficial ambassador of Chicana and Chicano Studies.

In particular, Professor Hurtado's two books: *The Color of Privilege: Three Blasphemies on Race and Feminism* published in 1996 (University of Michigan Press) and *Voicing Chicana Feminisms: Young Women Speak Out on Sexuality and Identity* published in 2003 (New York University Press) transformed the ways in which we speak about gender, power, and ourselves. *The Color of Privilege* is long recognized for advancing the theory of "relational privilege" or, as she posits, the relative social distance to white men by women of color. In this hallmark book, Professor Hurtado argues that gender subordination and political solidarity must be examined in the framework of culture and socioeconomic context. Many of us read for the first time a written articulation of our own ambivalence as women of color to previous theories of feminism, often written for middle-class, white women. The significance of these writings are

evidenced in her 2013 invitation to Harvard University where a symposium, based on this book and her writings on intersectionalities, were honored. Her second book, *Voicing Chicana Feminisms* based on 101 interviews with college-aged Chicanas was one of the first books published by New York University Press on a topic related exclusively to Chicanas. It has helped pave the way for numerous books published thereafter on Chicanas and Chicanos at NYU Press and other “top tiered” academic presses. Assigned as a foundational text in many introductory and upper division Chicana Studies courses, college students often report seeing themselves within the pages of *Voicing Chicana Feminisms*. The rest of us see our former selves, our previous tussles with gendered expectations, our cultural and/or familial struggles, but we also recognize our strengths as Chicanas. Her writings have helped generations of scholars identify, articulate, and challenge the many often-haunting forms of power and privilege.

Professor Hurtado’s commitment to social justice flows seamlessly from her research to her teaching and students are encouraged to tackle nettlesome problems in schools, families, or other social sites to uncover systems of privilege and consider alternative models of action. Professor Hurtado has modeled a politicized commitment to teaching and mentoring younger Chicanas and Chicanos. Her mentorship is evident in her former students, Chicanas who hold political offices, Men of Color with faculty positions, Chicanas who are now filmmakers, Chicanas in public policy, and too many Chicana faculty across a range of educational institutions to name.

As a senior scholar, she continues to push the boundaries at all levels of academic production to create a more inclusive, innovative, and activist academy in the service of students, junior faculty, and community. Aside from her esteemed invitations to speak, for

instance, at the White House, I have been most moved by witnessing her interactions at academic conferences and community events with K-12 teachers and social workers. Many of them young Chicanas and Chicanos; they not only approach her to express their gratitude and admiration for an essay she authored recently or decades ago that they have stumbled across, but they ask poignant questions and link their own lived experiences with her written words. Most of all, they thank her for writing essays that inspire them to continue to labor in the interest of transforming our communities.

As a colleague, Professor Hurtado often rallies my colleagues and I at UCSB by reminding us of the significance of this department – its 1968 origins, El Plan de Santa Barbara, our inaugural doctoral program in Chicana and Chicano Studies and the tumultuous political climate in California. She stresses and models how our scholarship can hold ramifications beyond our professional boundaries. Professor Hurtado carries the type of leadership qualities that made each of us find a renewed love for our profession. She consistently inspires me to be a part of a community of scholars that dares to envision a different future for the academy.

It is my honor to present this distinction, the 2015 NACCS Scholar of the Year, to my mentor, dear friend, and colleague, Aída Hurtado.