

Rudolfo Anaya honored for 'pioneering stories'

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Ultima," which is set in rural New Mexico. The book is required reading in many high school and college literature courses, although it has also stirred controversy for its language and sexual references. Anaya also has written four cultural mysteries, called "The Albuquerque Quartet," as well as children's books, essays and plays.

Using a wheelchair but in obvious high spirits, a beaming Anaya raised his arm and shouted "¡Viva, Obama!" as a military escort wheeled him off of the dais after his medal presentation. The well-dressed crowd, which included Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich of New Mexico, erupted in cheers and laughter.

Asked afterward by a **Journal** reporter about his shout-out to Obama, Anaya grinned, gave a "thumbs up" sign and said, "He's my hero, man."

Anaya, born in 1937, was raised by a cattleman near Santa Rosa before moving to Albuquerque in middle school. He later earned his bachelor's and two master's degrees at the University of New Mexico. Anaya now lives in Albuquerque. He told the **Journal** that his entire body of work is formed by his experiences in New Mexico.

"I'm thoroughly New Mexican," Anaya said. "I grew up there. I know the landscape, the people, the small communities. I've said before that in order to understand me, you have to understand me in the context of New Mexico."

Anaya said he enjoyed the ceremony, which Obama claimed was "more rowdy" than usual — a fact the



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Rudolfo Anaya calls out to the audience in the East Room of the White House after receiving the National Humanities Medal from President Barack Obama on Thursday.

president attributed to the presence of Brooks, a comic and filmmaker perhaps best-known for his classic "Blazing Saddles."

"There was a lot of emotion and joy

and passion for people who are in the arts and humanities," Anaya said. "One feels very grateful and thankful when that happens."

The celebrated author also had a

special message for those back in his beloved home state.

"Tell them I'm going to bring my new medal home," he said. "Tell Santa Rosa this is for them."

Moderate drought declines in New Mexico

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was 3.65 inches. Average rainfall for New Mexico in August is 2.47 inches.

"September continues to see those above-normal rainfall totals, particularly in the southeast," Fontenot said during Thursday's meeting of the New Mexico Drought Monitoring Workgroup. The group is made up of members of the National Weather Service and representatives of state and federal agencies.

Fontenot said there have also been impressive rainfall totals over the past 60 days in Catron County in west-central New Mexico.

"New Mexico has moistened up nicely," he said.

A month ago, moderate drought formed a crescent that stained portions of the southeastern and east-central counties of Otero, Chaves, Eddy, Lea, Roosevelt, Curry, De Baca, Quay and Guadalupe. Last month, moderate drought also stretched up the western edge of the state from Hidalgo through Grant, Catron, Cibola, McKinley and San Juan counties.

Now, however, moderate drought is restricted to much