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ENCAMPMENT, Wyo., March 5, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Rudolfo Anaya, whose 1972 novel, "Bless Me, Ultima," launched his career and established him as a leader of the Chicano literary movement, will receive the Owen Wister Award for Lifetime Contributions to Western Literature from Western Writers of America (WesternWriters.org).

The honor means that Anaya, 80, will also be inducted into the Western Writers Hall of Fame, housed outside the McCracken Research Library at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, Wyo.

"The work of Hall of Fame writers represents the diversity of the West, and Rudolfo Anaya is a stunning example of that," said Candy Moulton, Western Writers of America's executive director. "With passion and clarity he has delivered prose that formed and leads the way in the area of Chicano literature. He stands shoulder-to-shoulder with other great Southwest authors, leaving a legacy that will inspire readers and writers for generations to come."

The nonprofit writers guild's highest honor will be presented June 20-23 during Western Writers of America's convention in Billings, Mont.

"My ancestors came to the Southwest in 1598," Anaya said from his Albuquerque, N.M., home. "I have been writing their story to honor them and their struggle in this land that was not so romantic then, and is still harsh and beautiful. Those ancestors fill my imagination and dreams."

Also author of the Sonny Baca mystery series,
Anaya has written for children, young adults and
adults. His titles include "Tortuga," "Zia Summer,"
"The Old Man's Love Story," "The Man Who Could
Fly and Other Stories" and "How Chile Came to
New Mexico."

"Anaya brings to readers an incisive, unromanticized look at a Latin American culture too often marginalized by traditional Western writing," Western Writers of America president Kirk Ellis said.

Western Writers of America was founded in the 1950s to honor and promote all forms of literature about the American West. Previous Owen Wister honorees include Pulitzer Prize winner N. Scott Momaday; historians David Dary and Robert M. Utley; and best-selling novelists Elmore Leonard, Tony Hillerman and Lucia St. Clair Robson.

The Wister Award is a bronze statue of a buffalo created especially for Western Writers of America by artist Robert Duffie.

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