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Honorary Degree Award Citation for Hugo Martinez-Serros

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Honorary Degree Awarded to Retiring Faculty

Hugo Martinez-Serros, Professor of Spanish

"Hugo Martinez-Serros, one reviewer of the collection of your short stories published in 1989, taking special note of your 'rich, blistering indictments of racism,' called you a 'pioneer of Mexican-American literature.' At Lawrence, you have been a pioneer of the study of Spanish-American literature, opening a vista to generations of Lawrence students, and often accompanying them to explore that bountiful genre in the countries and settings where it was written. Your students have relished in particular the personal engagement with the material they studied, and your close, demanding attention to them as individuals. Your anecdotes, one student noted, were worth 100 textbooks.

The excitement you have brought to the study of Hispanic literature and Spanish language has been obvious to all of your students. So has been the high level of your expectations. Some have moaned about the pace, or groaned about the load, but in the end even they have been thankful for the experience. For you never left them to sink or swim on their own. It has always been your concern for each of them and your zest for justice, equality, and life that had distinguished your teaching and your work with students. One of them has recalled that when he was a troubled sophomore, you had more faith in him than he had in himself, and he remembers as well, on a fine spring morning as he strolled the campus, you leaned out of Main Hall and asked, 'Mr. Sagan, would you care to join us today?'

As your students grew confident in their use of Spanish, they also grew confident in the formulation and expression of their ideas. And many of them may still bear as their fondest memory of Lawrence their Saturday afternoons at Casa Martinez-Serros, where your culinary genius overwhelmed even as it filled them. It is probably unprecedented that the university has been able to congratulate a member of the faculty on the quality of his tutorials and his tertulias, and I am delighted to be able to convey that alliterative compliment on this occasion.

By the authority vested in me, I now confer upon you the degree of Master of Arts, *ad eundem*, and admit you to its rights, its privileges, and its obligations."

Citation read by President Richard Warch at Commencement, 1995