Pat Mora’s Biography

Pat is an award-winning author of books for adults and children, a literacy advocate, and a popular presenter on creativity, inclusivity and bookjoy. The University of Arizona Press recently published her seventh adult poetry collection, Encantado: Desert Monologues; and Lee and Low Books, her children’s poetry collection, Bookjoy, Wordjoy. Her other adult collections include Adobe Odes, Aunt Carmen’s Book of Practical Saints, Agua Santa: Holy Water, Communion, Borders, and Chants. Pat also wrote two collections for young adults, Dizzy in Your Eyes: Poems about Love written in the voices of teens, and My Own True Name.

Zing! Seven Creativity Practices for Educators and Students is both an epistolary memoir of her journey as a writer and a writing creativity guide. The Washington Post described her acclaimed family memoir, House of Houses as a “textual feast … a regenerative act … and an eloquent bearer of the old truth that it is through the senses that we apprehend love.” Nepantla: Essays from the Land in the Middle was reviewed by Choice as, “Twenty inspiring essays written in a very poetic prose … A valuable contribution to American literature.”

Among her awards are Honorary Doctorates from North Carolina State University and SUNY Buffalo, a life-time achievement award from the Texas Institute of Letters, a Virginia Hamilton Literary Award, an honorary membership in the American Library Association, a life-time membership in USBBY, a Civitella Ranieri Fellowship to write in Umbria, Italy, and a Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Texas at El Paso. She was a recipient and judge of a Poetry Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and a recipient and advisor of the Kellogg National Leadership Fellowships.

With her daughter, Libby Martinez, Pat wrote I Pledge Allegiance and Bravo, Chico Canta! Bravo! A literacy advocate excited about sharing what she calls “bookjoy,” in 1996, she founded Children’s Day, Book Day, in Spanish, El día de los niños, El día de los libros, “Día.” Pat and her partners including the American Library Association and First Book nationally promote this year-long initiative of creatively linking all children and families to books and establishing annual April Children’s Day, Book Day celebrations. Pat’s Book Fiesta captures this bookjoy spirit. April 2019 is the 23rd anniversary of this initiative.

Born in El Paso, Texas to a loving, bilingual family, Pat lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She’s grateful for her three children, her enthusiastic five-year-old granddaughter, her husband, retired anthropology professor Vern Scarborough, and her readers. A former teacher, university administrator, museum director, and consultant, Pat is always working on new books.

www.patmora.com