



Lessons from Latina Trailblazer Pat Mora at Texas Book Fest

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Article and Photo by Nancy Flores

Prolific author and El Paso native Pat Mora received the 2015 Texas Writer's Award on Saturday, which came with a pair of custom-made cowboy boots. As founder of the program, "Día de los Libros/Día de los Niños" she also helps promote children's literacy across the country. Mora's extensive literary work, which includes everything from bilingual picture books to poetry for adults, has made her an influential literary figure.

Here are four lessons from the Latina trailblazer from her conversation with Lois Kim, executive director of the Texas Book Festival at the State Capitol's House Chamber.

Don't Give Up: Mora says she receives many rejections, but her tenacity keeps propelling her forward. "I'm stubborn," she says. "I said that early on. If all it takes (to make it, get published) is stubbornness, then I have a chance."



Children Need Diverse Role Models: When Mora was in the 8th grade, she asked her parents for a typewriter to write poems. She says she never considered writing as a profession because, "I'd never seen a writer who was like me."

Bilingualism Should be Valued: "There needs to be a climate where (bilingualism) is an asset," Mora says. "Humans have odd ways in which we make ourselves feel superior. Our little egos are always hungry to be fed."

Literary World Needs Diversity, Too: "Being a writer is a hard," Mora says. Now being a writer of Mexican, Native American, Asian or Middle Eastern descent, she says, brings additional challenges "because that's not who the editors are and that's not who the reviewers are."