

NEWS RELEASE

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NC State to Host Author, Award Inaugural Friday Medal in Celebration of American Education Week

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

As part of American Education Week, Nov. 13-17, North Carolina State University will host Pat Mora, an award-winning author of poetry, nonfiction, and children's books on Nov. 13 and will present the inaugural Friday Medal to Dr. Kenneth A. Branch, founding principal of Centennial Campus Middle School on Nov. 15.

Mora will lead a class discussion for elementary education students, give a book reading and hold a public book signing. She will make a presentation to area teachers, students and faculty on Monday, Nov. 13, at 4:45 p.m. at the Friday Institute. The public book signing will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 14, at Quail Ridge Books in Raleigh at 7 p.m.

"We are honored to have Pat Mora here on campus to help us celebrate American Education Week," College of Education Dean Kathryn Moore says. "The week is truly an occasion to champion education throughout the United States. Pat has served as an inspiration to millions through her advocacy and tireless efforts to promote the joy found in reading."

In addition to writing dozens of books, Mora has taught at the University of New Mexico and served as a museum director and was a consultant for youth exchanges between the United States and Mexico. She has received numerous awards for her writings, which include children's books such as "Tomas and the Library Lady," "The Night the Moon Fell," "The Song of Francis and the Animals," and a memoir, "House of Houses."

Another highlight of American Education week will be the inaugural presentation of the Friday Medal to Branch. The medal will be presented by University of North Carolina System President Emeritus William C. "Bill" Friday on Wednesday, Nov. 15, at 5:30 p.m. at the William and Ida Friday Institute on Centennial Campus.

The medal was created to honor significant contributions to education for the people of North Carolina and beyond. Celebrating the achievements of Bill and Ida Friday, the

medal will be given annually to those who best exemplify the vision, mission, ideals and goals of the Friday Institute. “We are grateful for the opportunity to be a small part of honoring distinguished service to public education. In a democracy there is no higher calling,” says Bill Friday.

“Kenneth Branch has been creative in coming up with new ways to challenge students and develop curricula that will provide the level of support they need,” says Bill McNeal, former superintendent for the Wake County Public School System. “I believe that he is the essence of trying to make certain that education is available for all children. I can’t think of a recipient more deserving.”

As the founding principal of Centennial Campus Middle School, Branch worked to bring the school to life. Before the doors opened for class in July 2000, he managed every detail – from hiring teachers to selecting equipment. Branch created a true model middle school for Wake County and the state. A tireless advocate for middle school children, he was named Middle School Principal of the Year by the Wake County PTA Council in 2006. “Dr. Branch is a proven leader in education who is truly committed to teaching and learning,” says Del Burns, Wake County Public School System superintendent.

A native of Rich Square, N.C., Branch holds two post-graduate degrees from NC State and has been an educator for more than 30 years. Earlier this year, he was named senior director of magnet programs for the Wake County Public School System.

Sponsored by the National Education Association (NEA), the theme for American Education Week is “Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility.” Throughout the week, NEA and its 2.8 million members are hosting events across the country designed to raise awareness about the critical need for educators, parents, students and communities to work together for great public education in America. American Education Week began in 1921 as a way to generate public awareness and support for education at a time when illiteracy was still a major problem in the United States.

For a complete schedule of events surrounding NC State’s celebration of American Education Week, visit www.ced.ncsu.edu.

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