

Writer Gloria Anzaldúa, 61, dies

BIO-D
SENTINEL STAFF REPORT

Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa, an internationally recognized cultural theorist and award-winning writer died May 15 of complications related to diabetes. She was 61.

One of the first openly lesbian Chicana authors, Anzaldúa had been pursuing her doctorate at UC Santa Cruz. She was a lecturer at the university in the late 1980s.

She published poetry, theoretical essays, short stories, autobiographical narratives, interviews, children's books, and multigenre anthologies. She played a major role in redefining contemporary Chicano/a and lesbian/queer identities. As editor or co-editor of three multicultural anthologies, she pushed for an inclusionary feminist movement.

Anzaldúa is best known for "Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza" (1987), a hybrid collection of poetry and prose which



GLORIA
ANZALDÚA

wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy."

Anzaldúa's published works also include "This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color" (1981), a groundbreaking collection of essays and poems widely recognized by scholars as the premiere multicultural feminist text; "Making Face,

was named one of the "100 Best Books of the Century" by Hungry Mind Review and Utne Reader.

In describing the book, Anzaldúa said "the Borderlands are physically present

Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists-of-Color" (1990), a multigenre collection used in many university classrooms; two bilingual children's books — "Friends from the Other Side/Amigos del otro lado" (1993) and "Prieta and the Ghost Woman/ Prieta y la Llorona" (1995); "Interviews/Entrevistas" (2000), a memoir-like collection of interviews; and *this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation* (2002), a co-edited collection of essays, poetry, and artwork that examines the current status of feminist/womanist theorizing.

Patricia Morales, executive director of New Horizons School in Soquel, recalled reading Anzaldúa's work while a student at UCSC, and meeting her on a couple of occasions.

"She was a great inspiration to Latina writers in general," said Morales. "I personally love her

poetry."

Anzaldúa's awards include the Before Columbus Foundation American Book Award, the Lambda Lesbian Small Book Press Award, the Lesbian Rights Award, the Sappho Award of Distinction, an National Endowment for the Arts Fiction Award, and the American Studies Association Lifetime Achievement Award.

Born in the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas, she was the eldest child of Urbano and Amalia Anzaldúa. She earned her bachelor's degree from Pan American University and her master's from University of Texas Austin.

She is survived by mother Amalia; sister Hilda; brothers Urbano Anzaldúa Jr. and Oscar Anzaldúa; five nieces, three nephews, 18 grandnieces and grandnephews; and a multitude of aunts and uncles.

Colleague Irene Reti said a public memorial will be planned later.

5-18-04