

American Ethnic Studies

Rita Maes

Submitted by Melinda Gándara

It is with great pleasure that the American Ethnic Studies Department honors Rita Maes as the recipient of the 2023-2024 outstanding student award in Ethnic Studies. Rita is a mother, sister, poet, and life-long learner. Rita began her education as a self-learner who is grounded in ancient Indigenous wisdom. Rita's academic work incorporates Indigenous spirituality and knowledge. Rita shares her educational journey openly, which in turn creates a sense of connection and belonging. She leads with ease and grace -- we especially admire her for underscoring the importance of cultura, crecimiento y conexión and for nurturing what is known by the Maya as, u kuxtal yéetel u máatsil máako'ob (the ethics of socially caring for one another). She is an inspiration for us all.