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Illinois Wesleyan Hispanic Studies Professor Edits New Volume

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Illinois Wesleyan Hispanic Studies Professor Edits New Volume

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Mauricio Parra, associate professor of Hispanic studies at Illinois Wesleyan University, is the editor of a new volume, *Myths and Legends of Mexico*, which features the recreation of 20 popular Mexican legends by renowned scholar Luis Leal.

Published by the University of California at Santa Barbara's Center for Chicano Studies, the 190-page volume is bilingual and includes original illustrations by Alvaro Suman, who graphically captures the theme and spirit of each legend.

According to Parra, the book is directed at a wide public, including the academic community but also local and national museums. "With this work, Professor Leal merges an academic project with the diffusion of myths central to the American Southwest and the Mexican-Chicano cultural memory," said Parra. "Professor Leal has rescued, by transcribing into written form, a series of myths and legends in order to share these stories with future generations in the United States."

In addition to editing the book, Parra is also the author of the introduction where he writes: "Luis Leal's recreation of these myths and legends is remarkable not only for the fidelity to historical detail which enriches the narrative, but also for the way in which his style adapts to the theme, epoch, and material. In this manner, the pre-Columbian myths are retold in a distinctive syntactical rhythm, which evokes the cadence and phrasing of the indigenous languages."

Concludes Parra in the introduction: "These narrations and legends, faithfully recreated by Luis Leal and splendidly illustrated by Alvaro Suman are, in truth, key pieces of a rich and complex history which deserves, without any doubt, to be recognized and preserved for present and future generations."

Parra has been a member of the Illinois Wesleyan faculty since 1990. He received both the bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of California at Santa Barbara and the Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. He teaches Latin American literature, culture, and film. He has taught all levels of language instruction and has made numerous presentations throughout the U.S., Latin America, and Europe. A specialist in Gabriel García Márquez, he has also written on a wide range of subjects, from Colonial text to Latin America's modernity/postmodernity debates, and his research has been published in journals such as *La Torre*, *Orbis Tertius*, and *Discourse*.