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Farm Worker Advocate to Receive Honorary Doctorate from Chapman

Jos Padilla, executive director of California Rural Legal Assistance, will receive degree at May 21 commencement ceremony

ORANGE, Calif., May 6, 2005 - Jos Padilla, executive director of San Francisco-based California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA), will receive an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Chapman University during graduate school commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 21.

Padilla has devoted the past 25 years of his life to leading CRLA, an influential advocate for the rights of Californias farm workers and rural poor. The organization provides legal assistance for those in need, handling cases ranging from housing, immigration and labor disputes to pesticide exposure, civil rights and equal education.

Mr. Padilla is recognized as a model of how one person can change the world through action, said James L. Doti, president of Chapman University. He embodies Chapmans continuing emphasis upon values and ethics through his vital work with the rural poor in our state, and he has helped to ensure that the basic human rights of those in need are served and protected.

Parham Williams, dean of the Chapman School of Law, added, Mr. Padilla has provided exemplary service to the community through selfless dedication personally and professionally. Chapman appropriately recognizes his lifelong work by awarding him this honorary degree.

Born in a small rural community in Imperial County, Padilla earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Stanford University and a law degree from the University of California-Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law. He joined CRLA in 1978 and has directed the organization since 1984, overseeing all 22 of its offices, including a staff of 46 attorneys and 43 other workers. While ensuring the ongoing success of CRLAs legal efforts, Padilla has also worked to develop a strong lobbying presence to represent the rural poor in the legislative arena.

Padilla serves on the boards of the Poverty and Race Research Action Council and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, and has testified before President Clintons Commission on Race and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. He has received the San Francisco Minority Bar Coalitions Award of Excellence and the California La Raza Lawyers Association Cruz Reynoso Community Service Award. In 2000, he was elected into the Stanford Alumni Multicultural Hall of Fame, and in 2001 was named one of the 100 Influential Lawyers in California by the California Law Business Los Angeles Daily Journal.

President Doti will present the honorary doctorate to Padilla during Chapman Universitys 2005 graduate school commencement ceremony, which begins at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 21 at the universitys Kennedy Field.