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Nobel Peace Laureate Rigoberta Menchu to Speak at CU on Oct. 20

ORANGE, Calif., Oct. 9, 2008 -- Author, activist and Noble Peace Prize recipient Rigoberta Menchú will speak at Chapman University on Monday, Oct. 20 at 7 p.m. in the Bush Conference Center, Beckman Hall Rm. 404. Her lecture, "Human Rights and the Struggle for Peace," which is open to the public free of charge, is presented by Chapman's Wilkinson College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Peace Studies program, Associated Students and the United Nations Association of Orange County. For more information, the public can call 714-532-6017 or email wilkinsoncollege@chapman.edu.

Born to a poor indigenous peasant family in Guatemala, Ms. Menchú was raised in the Quiche branch of the Mayan culture. Over the years, she has become widely known as a leading advocate of Indian rights and ethno-culture reconciliation, not only in her native Guatemala but in the Western Hemisphere. She was the recipient of the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize and the 1998 Prince of Asturias Award. A UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, she is the subject of the testimonial biography *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala* (1984) and the author of the autobiographical work *Crossing Borders: An Autobiography* (1998).

In 2006, Ms. Menchú was one of the founders of The Nobel Women's Initiative, an organization founded to help strengthen work being done in support of women's rights around the world. In February 2007, Ms. Menchú announced that she would form an indigenous political party called Encuentro por Guatemala and that she would stand in the 2007 presidential election. In doing so she became Guatemala's first indigenous presidential candidate, and had she been elected, she would have become the first woman to hold office, the first Mayan President and Latin America's fourth indigenous president.