The Association of Departments of Foreign Languages
presents
the ADFL Award for Distinguished Service to the Profession
to

Ofelia Zepeda

Regents’ Professor in the Departments of Linguistics and American Indian Studies at the University of Arizona, an accomplished poet, linguist, professor, and activist, Ofelia Zepeda has long been a leader in the preservation of endangered indigenous languages. Known as the leading expert in the Tohono O’odham language, Zepeda has worked with her students to transcribe and translate O’odham songs as a means of preserving the O’odham linguistic and cultural heritage. Her highly praised Papago Grammar (1983) is the only pedagogical textbook on the Tohono O’odham language. In addition to her scholarly contributions, Zepeda has written several collections of poetry, coedited an anthology of Native American writing, and served as the editor of Sun Tracks, a University of Arizona Press series dedicated to the work of Native writers. Zepeda has a distinguished record of academic leadership, and she is a cofounder and now director of the nationally recognized American Indian Language Development Institute, which helps train Native and non-Native teachers working with American Indian students. She also served for many years as director of the American Indian Studies program at the University of Arizona. In 1999 she received a MacArthur Fellowship for her commitment to “preserving Native American languages and to revitalizing tribal cultures.” We honor Ofelia Zepeda for her rigorous scholarship in linguistics, her steadfast commitment to teaching the Tohono O’odham language to tribal members and students, and her passionate advocacy of Native American culture.

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