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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW LETTERS ON THE AIR RADIO SERIES NURTURED EARLY CAREER
OF NEW U.S. POET LAUREATE, JUAN FELIPE HERRERA

Back in 1992, when the young Chicano poet Juan Felipe Herrera had few collections of poetry to his name, he appeared on *New Letters on the Air*, the nationally syndicated, weekly radio series produced by *New Letters* magazine at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Now an award-winning writer of over 20 books, Herrera has since served as the California Poet Laureate (2012-2014) and was elected chancellor of the Academy of American Poets in 2011. On June 10th, he was named by the Librarian of Congress as the 21st poet laureate consultant in poetry 2015-16—the first Chicano to serve as the U.S. poet laureate.

In the *New Letters* 1992 [interview](#), which can be heard free online at www.newletters.org, the young Herrera discusses merging English and Spanish in his poetry and the difficulty of feeling excluded in America as a child of a migrant farmer. He reads from his book *Akrilica* and talks about politics in poetry and how sometimes anger fuels his creative work. “I don’t focus on one dimension or one level or one story or one image or one theme or one subject,” Herrera tells interviewer and series producer at the time, Rebekah Presson. “I don’t write in that fashion. I think we are all multi-dimensional.”

Herrera’s words and poems were heard by many thousands of people in our multi-city broadcasts then, as are the words of each writer currently broadcast on the oldest and longest-running literary radio series in the nation. *New Letters on the Air* continues in its nearly 40-year mission to promote literary writers, whether new or widely known.

Many past U.S. poet laureates and poetry consultants can be found in the *New Letters on the Air* audio archives, where CDs and MP3 downloads can also be purchased online or by phone at (816) 235-1159. A free podcast of the weekly show is available through the iTunes store. Followers can find *New Letters on the Air* on Facebook, Tumblr, and Twitter at NewLettersRadio. Angela Elam is the current producer/host with Jamie Walsh as the assistant producer. The executive director is Robert Stewart.