

Attend

**James E. Smith Conference on World Affairs
For Better or Worse: Crossing the Line
November 14-15, 2022 | University of Nebraska – Kearney**

Sonia Nazario, Keynote Speaker



Sonia Nazario is an award-winning journalist whose stories have tackled some of this country's most intractable issues -- hunger, drug addiction, immigration -- and have won some of the most prestigious journalism and book awards, including two Pulitzer Prizes. She was also a finalist for a third Pulitzer, in Public Service.

A fluent Spanish speaker of Jewish ancestry whose personal history includes living in Argentina during the so-called dirty war, Nazario spent decades reporting and writing about social issues for U.S. newspapers.

She is best known for "Enrique's Journey," her story of a Honduran boy's struggle to find his mother in the U.S. Published as a series in the Los Angeles Times, "Enrique's Journey" won the Pulitzer Prize for feature writing in 2003. It was turned into a book by Random House that became a national bestseller, a freshman read at 100 universities, and required reading at hundreds of high schools across the country. A young adult version of Enrique's Journey was published in 2013 aimed at middle schoolers.

When a national crisis erupted in 2014 over the detention of unaccompanied immigrant children at the border, Nazario returned to Honduras to report an article in The New York Times that detailed the violence causing the exodus and argued that it is a refugee crisis, not an immigration crisis. After the piece was published, she addressed the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the U.N. General Assembly, and gave many interviews to national media, including The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, NBC's Meet the Press, Anderson Cooper 360, and Al Punto with Jorge Ramos.

She has also spent the past decade recruiting attorneys to provide pro-bono asylum representation to unaccompanied minors. In 2015, her humanitarian efforts led to her selection as the Don and Arvonne Fraser Human Rights Award recipient by the Advocates for Human Rights, the Champion of Children by First Focus and a Golden Door award winner by HIAS Pennsylvania. In 2016 the American Immigration Council gave her the American Heritage Award and the Houston Peace & Justice Center honored her with their National Peacemaker Award. In 2018, she was given the Spirit of HOPE [Hispanas Organized for Political Equality] Award.

Nazario, who grew up in Kansas and in Argentina, has written extensively from Latin America and about Latinos in the United States. She has been named among the most influential Latinos by Hispanic Business Magazine and a "trendsetter" by Hispanic Magazine. In 2012 Columbia Journalism Review



named Nazario among “40 women who changed the media business in the past 40.” In 2020, Parade Magazine named Nazario one of “50+ Most Influential Latin-American Women in History.”

She is a graduate of Williams College and has a master’s degree in Latin American studies from the University of California, Berkeley. She has honorary doctorates from Mount St. Mary’s College and Whittier College. She began her career at the Wall Street Journal, and later joined the Los Angeles Times.

“Enrique’s Journey” won more than a dozen awards, among them the Pulitzer Prize for feature writing, the George Polk Award for International Reporting, the Grand Prize of the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, and the National Assn. of Hispanic Journalists Guillermo Martinez-Márquez Award for Overall Excellence.

In 1998, Ms. Nazario was a Pulitzer Prize finalist for a series on children of drug addicted parents. And in 1994, she won a George Polk Award for Local Reporting for a series about hunger among schoolchildren in California.

She serves on the advisory boards of several non-profits: the University of North Texas Mayborn Literary Non-fiction Writer’s Conference, ReNews, which explores the impacts of socio-cultural issues on journalism and Catch the Next, which works to double the number of Latinos enrolling in college. She also is on the board of Kids In Need of Defense, launched by Microsoft and Angelina Jolie to provide pro-bono attorneys to unaccompanied immigrant children. She is now at work on her second book and is a contributing opinion writer for the New York Times.