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**AMERICAN CHAMPION OF CIVIL RIGHTS HONORED ON U.S.
POSTAGE STAMP**

Cesar E. Chavez Stamp Salutes Farm Labor Leader

LOS ANGELES – At a ceremony in the heart of downtown Los Angeles, filled with hundreds of union workers, farm laborers and other Americans touched by the legacy of an American hero, the United States Postal Service paid tribute to civil rights and farm labor leader Cesar E. Chavez with a new commemorative postage stamp issued today in his honor.

The Cesar E. Chavez stamp is available today in post offices in the Los Angeles area, and in post offices nationwide beginning tomorrow. William Almaraz, Los Angeles District Manager, U.S. Postal Service, was the dedicating official.

“My father really believed that it is everyone’s duty to help those who are less fortunate,” said Paul F. Chavez, Cesar’s son and Chairman of the Cesar E. Chavez Foundation. “The Cesar E. Chavez commemorative stamp is a powerful vehicle to introduce a new generation of Americans to his vital legacy, teaching them that through determination and hard work they can improve their own lives and communities.”

The ceremony began with the presentation of colors by the Roosevelt High School Color Guard, followed by postal employee Miguel Salas who sang the National Anthem.

Joining Almaraz and Chavez were Gray Davis, Governor of California; Andres F. Irlando, Executive Director, Cesar F. Chavez Foundation; James K. Hahn, Mayor, Los Angeles; Arturo S. Rodriguez, President, United Farm Workers; Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis (D-32nd District); Marco Antonio Firebaugh, Chair, California Legislative Caucus; Gloria Molina, Supervisor, First District, Los Angeles County; Dolores Huerta, Co-Founder, United Farm Workers and Robert Rodriguez, stamp designer.

Chavez is best known as the founder of the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO (UFW). He was a tireless advocate for nonviolent social change and dedicated his life to working



in service of others. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy once called Chavez “one of the heroic figures of our time.”

A second-generation American, Chavez was born on March 31, 1927, near his family’s farm in Yuma, Ariz. At age 10, his family became migrant farm workers after losing their farm in the Great Depression. Throughout his youth and into his adulthood, Chavez migrated across the Southwest, laboring in the fields and vineyards where he was exposed to the hardships and injustices of farm worker life.

Chavez’s life as a community organizer began in 1952 when he joined the Community Service Organization (CSO), a prominent Latino civil rights group. While with the CSO, Chavez coordinated voter registration drives and conducted campaigns against racial and economic discrimination primarily in urban areas. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Chavez served as CSO’s national director.

Chavez’s dream, however, was to create an organization to protect and serve farm workers, whose poverty and disenfranchisement he had shared. In 1962 Chavez resigned from the CSO to establish the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers of America.

For more than three decades Chavez led the first successful farm workers union in American history, achieving dignity, respect, fair wages, medical coverage, pension benefits and humane living conditions as well as countless other rights and protections for hundreds of thousands of farm workers. Against previously insurmountable odds, he led successful strikes and boycotts that resulted in the first industry-wide labor contracts in the history of American agriculture. His union’s efforts brought about the passage of the groundbreaking 1975 California Agricultural Labor Relations Act to protect farm workers. Today, it remains the only law in the nation that protects the right of farm workers to unionize.

Chavez passed away on April 23, 1993, in San Luis, Ariz., only miles from his birthplace of 66 years earlier. More than 50,000 people attended his funeral services in the small town of Delano, Calif., the same community in which he had planted the seed for the UFW more than three decades before.

The stamp image was painted by freelance illustrator Robert Rodriguez and features a portrait of Chavez against a background of empty grape fields. Rodriguez based the portrait on a 1976 photograph of Chavez taken by Bob Fitch and provided to the Postal Service by the Cesar E. Chavez Foundation in Los Angeles. Rodriguez based the background on an aerial photograph taken in the 1960s by Ted Streshinsky.

The following text appears on the back of the stamp: “Civil rights leader Cesar E. Chavez (1927-1993) founded the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO. A tireless advocate for justice and equality for all people, he dedicated his life to working in service of others.”

To see the Cesar E. Chavez stamp, locate the online version of this press release at www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/welcome.htm. Current U.S. stamps and philatelic

products, as well as the free USA Philatelic catalog, are available by calling toll free 1 800 STAMP-24. A selection of U.S. stamps and gift items are also available online at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. Images of many current, past and future stamp issues can be found in the Stamp Issues section of the Collector's Corner.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits 137 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$66 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 207 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves 7 million customers each day at its 40,000 retail locations nationwide.

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