

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rick Najera First Latino to Join Tavis Smiley's New Venture: High Quality Speakers Bureau

Media Mogul, PBS Host, Speaker, Author and Community Leader Tavis Smiley Welcomes Rick Najera to Prestigious Speaking Group

LOS ANGELES – (January 11, 2011) – Award-winning writer/performer Rick Najera, twice honored as one of the most influential Latinos in America, has joined media mogul and philanthropist Tavis Smiley's bold venture into the speaker circuit with the establishment of High Quality Speakers Bureau (HQSB). Based in Los Angeles, HQSB represents the most prominent speakers of the highest quality in their respective fields and prides itself on integrity and exceptional customer service.

“Rick is a valuable addition to the HQSB roster,” said Tavis Smiley. He offers an entertaining approach to our collective mission, and his joining the Bureau underscores the company's goal of becoming the industry's trusted voice on multicultural issues.”

In addition to a prolific career in TV, film and theatre, Najera has also been an in-demand speaker lending his talents to hundreds of organizations and corporate functions. Speaking on topics such as diversity, entertainment and the Hispanic market, Najera has been a true pioneer and an influential voice for the Latino community. In 2010, he was sought out and featured on CNN's 'Latino in America' hosted by Soledad O'Brien.

Perhaps best known as the creator and writer of Latinologues, a collection of funny and poignant monologues about the Latino experience in America and produced on Broadway in 2005, Najera is a comedy-writing veteran whose credits include *In Living Color* and *Mad TV*. Najera co-wrote the Christmas film, *Nothing like the Holidays*, starring Alfred Molina, Debra Messing and John Leguizamo. His one-man comedy special, *Diary of a Dad Man*, will premier January 20th on Showtime.

“Rick Najera is the embodiment of diversity,” – Writers Guild of America

Joining Tavis Smiley and his acclaimed speakers bureau now is an opportune time, as Najera will serve as a bridge to both the Latino and Urban cultures as well as mainstream audiences with his intelligent wit and charismatic style. Najera will speak at the upcoming 29th Annual U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute Conference (USHLI), the largest Hispanic non-profit, nonpartisan organization promoting education, civic participation and leadership development for Latinos and other similarly disenfranchised groups February 17-20, 2011.

“HQSB is dedicated to providing a platform that delivers the faces, voices, and visions that are changing the world. We are extending that platform to Rick Najera,” said Tavis Smiley.

About High Quality Speakers Bureau

HQSB brings unique capabilities in lecture representation, special events and entertainment. HQSB helps organizations create powerful meeting experiences and messages using high quality talent, entertainment and creative media.

HQSB speakers are major thought leaders, celebrated personalities and top experts on the most important contemporary issues. Speakers such as Dr. Cornel West, Iyanla Vanzant, and Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. each have their own unique style, presence, and perspective. They have been used with proven results by organizations, associations, public forums, educational institutions, and corporations. HQSB provides an enormous intellectual base from which to draw expertise, informed commentary and even enjoyable entertainment.

For more information on Rick Najera or to schedule him for a speaking engagement, contact (323) 290-2311 or visit <http://www.tavistalks.com/speakersbureau/speakers/rick-najera>.

###