



The University of Oklahoma

DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES, LITERATURES, AND LINGUISTICS

13 March 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a letter of reference on behalf of Ms. Susan J. Houck, whom I am very happy to recommend for matters relating to desktop publishing, publication formatting, and copy editing.

I first had contact with Ms. Houck in 1992. In fact, the person who would eventually become the current chair of my department in Modern Languages at The University of Oklahoma suggested I go to the Information Processing Center (now called Document Production Services) and talk with her. My first impression was very positive. She was attentive, patient, and willing to start on my project immediately, even though, as I would suspect, the Information Processing Center was then, as I am sure is now, flooded with projects that required immediate attention. I mention this because not all technology experts tend to be attentive, patient, or willing to give clients immediate attention. At that time I was beginning to become familiar with technological matters and was the kind of person who would bore highly sophisticated technical experts. Explaining things well and without condescension and putting people at ease is indeed an art. At that time I was coming up for promotion from Associate to Professor at OU. It was very important to have my book, *Hispanic Essays in Honor of Frank P. Casa* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), come out as soon as possible. It was a massive book that had pictures, tables, and materials that needed to be scanned, reduced, and edited. At that time (in 1992) I would have been unable to do those things. Even now, when I have become much more sophisticated and able to do those matters, I realize how much time and patience those tasks take. In front of me, Susan was able to scan, reduce, and edit images and place them in the correct place in the book. What surprised me was that in two weeks or less the entire book (ca. 500 pp.) was ready to go. The press accepted the camera-ready copy without additional changes and the book came out in a timely manner.

Needless to say, I was very impressed with Ms. Susan J. Houck's performance. After all, mine was not the only project that required immediate attention. Yet, she was able to do her work succinctly and without need of additional editorial changes. As she gave me my copies I realized that my book was as much mine as hers. My only regret now is that I did not acknowledge her in my book then. However, writing a letter of reference on her behalf now is the next best thing.

I should point out that afterwards I went to the IPC to express my gratitude in person. Although I have no doubt Ms. Houck did all the work herself, when the process was over and I (and my publishing press) completely satisfied, instead of taking the credit she so well deserved, Ms. Houck acknowledged the team she had worked with, as well as the institution. I was most impressed. Hence, the next day I sent the Information Processing Center a number of tasty pizza pies. I also recommended her (their) services to my colleagues, two of whom also worked with Ms. Houck subsequently. I mention this merely to note another pleasant aspect of Ms. Houck: her kindness and modesty.

On account of her superb technical expertise, patience, and character, I highly recommend Ms. Susan J. Houck for anything relating to desktop publishing, publication formatting, and copy editing. After 1992, of course, I am sure her talents have increased tenfold.

Sincerely,

A. Robert Lauer
OU Professor of Spanish
& General Editor of *Ibérica*