

A Proposal for a Poet Laureate for the City of Kingston

Terms of Reference

13 August 2009

Goals

The appointment of a Poet Laureate for the City of Kingston is intended to recognize and honour individual achievement in poetry, to create a spokesperson for the literary arts in our City and to foster expression of the life of our community. The position of the Poet Laureate will increase awareness of Kingston as a centre of writing excellence and increase the profile of the literary arts within the City and beyond.

Duties

The Poet Laureate will act as Literary Ambassador for the City of Kingston. They will be required to write one new, original poem each year of their appointment that addresses or reflect one or more aspects of life in the City, to be read (by the Poet Laureate or a delegate) on the occasion of the Mayor's annual New Year's Day Levy. The Poet Laureate will give the City a limited license to publish these poems in hard copy and electronic forms, including on the City website, for the term of the appointment.

The Poet Laureate will be present and read a selection of poetry (which may be authored by them or another poet) at no fewer than three of the following public events (or equivalent ones) each year:

Mayor's Levy

Mayor's Walk (volunteer recognition)

Canada Day/First Capital Day

Poetry Day

Special non-annual civic ceremonies or official functions such as the opening of new buildings, by invitation

Furthermore, the Poet Laureate will serve as an advocate for literature and for literacy, and will be expected to participate in the literary life of the City.

The intellectual rights to writing produced during tenure is the property of the Poet Laureate.

Term

The Poet Laureate will be appointed for a term coinciding with the tenure of City Council, at present 4 years.

Support

The first Poet Laureate will receive an annual honorarium of \$2000 for each year of their term.

The Poet Laureate will liaise with the City through the Department of Culture and Heritage. The City staff will provide orientation to the newly appointed Poet Laureate. They will be provided with a

business card, City e-mail and mailing addresses, and occasional clerical, legal or technical support as required to fulfill their duties. The City will post the Poet Laureate's annual poem for the Mayor's Levy on its website, along with other material mutually agreed by the City and the Poet Laureate.

Eligibility and Appointment Criteria

Candidates must:

- hold a record of high achievement in poetry demonstrated by peer and/or public recognition.
- have published of a minimum of one book of poetry (not including self-publication), and other publications that display literary excellence.
- live and/or work in the City of Kingston. If the Poet Laureate leaves the City permanently, or is absent for a period greater than one year during their term, they must relinquish the position.
- be willing to fulfill the responsibilities of the position.

Selection Criteria:

- the quality and character of the poet's work
- significant contribution to poetry and the literary life of the City of Kingston
- knowledge and understanding of Kingston indicating a capacity to capture the life, times and place in poetry
- personal qualities and stature to effectively fulfill the ambassadorial duties of the Poet Laureate

Appointment Process

The Arts Advisory Committee of the City will appoint a special Nominating Committee for the Poet Laureate of 3 to 5 members, which may include the outgoing Poet Laureate, writers, publishers, book sellers, teachers, librarians, journalists, and/or any member of the public with suitable knowledge of poetry, and must include a member of the Arts Advisory Committee.

The Nominating Committee will deliberate and identify a candidate, and confirm the willingness of the candidate to serve in this role. They will present a recommendation of appointment to City Council. Once confirmed, City staff will contact the successful candidate to confirm the appointment. The public announcement of the appointment of the Poet Laureate by the Mayor should take place no later than 1 April of the year following the election of Council.