



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: April 11, 2017

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Arts And Community Promotions

SUBJECT: Proclamation Declaring April As National Poetry Month And Appointment Of Poet Laureate Enid Osborne For 2017-2019

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council declare April as National Poetry Month and approve the City Arts Advisory Committee's recommendation for the City Poet Laureate from April 11, 2017 to April 1, 2019.

DISCUSSION:

On November 2, 2004, City Council approved the process for and established a City Poet Laureate. The Poet Laureate for the City of Santa Barbara is an honorary position for which the City awards an honorarium of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) per year, which encompasses all civic or official work performed or produced in this position.

On December 19, 2006, City Council approved minor amendments to Guidelines regarding the Term of Service and Who May Nominate and on February 10, 2009 Council approved changes to Guideline language eliminating the exception of the current residing Poet Laureate to self-nominate.

The search for Poet Laureate began in early January and the nomination guidelines and deadline information were made available on the County Office of Arts & Culture and Public Library websites.

Nineteen letters of nomination were received by the March 1, 2017 deadline. The review committee met on March 15 to review the nominations and develop a recommendation, which was approved by the City Arts Advisory Committee at its March 16, 2017 meeting. A written report for this meeting, recommending Enid Osborne as Poet Laureate for the 2017-19 term is attached.

The City Poet Laureate will be installed in April to coincide with National Poetry Month.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

There is no budget implication associated with this Council item. The \$1,000 stipend is included in the County Office of Arts & Culture Fiscal Year 2017 budget.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Poet Laureate Guidelines
2. Addendum to this Report March 15, 2017

PREPARED BY: Sarah Rubin, Executive Director of the Office of Arts & Culture

SUBMITTED BY: Nina Johnson, Senior Assistant to the City Administrator

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office



ARTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Office of Arts & Culture Post Office Box 2369 Santa Barbara, CA 93120

SANTA BARBARA POET LAUREATE

Guidelines for Nominations

Statement of Purpose:

The City of Santa Barbara is seeking nominations for the position of Santa Barbara Poet Laureate. The person selected shall seek to advance awareness of and appreciation for literary arts and humanities within the greater Santa Barbara community. As both a local resident and a distinguished poet, the Poet Laureate shall represent and celebrate the diversity and history of Santa Barbara. As a spokesperson for the City's literary community, the Poet Laureate shall endeavor to promote the artistic achievements of the City of Santa Barbara and shall actively participate in ceremonial, educational and cultural activities in the community at various times throughout his or her term of service. Beginning in 2017, the Santa Barbara Public Library will serve as the official office of the Poet Laureate.

Term of Service:

The Poet Laureate for the City of Santa Barbara is an honorary position. The individual selected will serve a two-year term, commencing in April. Nearing the end of the Poet Laureate's term and prior to initiating the nomination process, the Poet Laureate Review Committee may extend an invitation to the sitting Poet Laureate to serve a second (consecutive) term, based on his or her performance. A Poet Laureate may not serve more than one term, unless invited by the committee to serve an additional consecutive term. The Poet Laureate will have thirty days to respond. If he or she elects not to accept the committee's invitation, the Poet Laureate must wait an intervening term prior to being re-nominated.

The City will award the Poet Laureate an honorarium of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) per year, which shall encompass all civic or official work performed or produced in this position.

Term Expectations

As a condition of appointment, the Poet Laureate will participate in a minimum of four annual public functions each year as determined by the City in conjunction with the Office of Arts & Culture and the Santa Barbara Public Library. These would include, for example, the inaugural meeting each year of the Santa Barbara City Council, Summer Solstice, Old Spanish Days, and other significant festivals or community events. Additionally, the Poet Laureate shall aim to be actively involved with local schools, and shall endeavor to create or facilitate workshops and readings that will bring the Poet Laureate into contact with students. To the extent possible, the Poet Laureate also will establish programs to coincide with his or her term of service to promote

community awareness of the literary arts and to encourage community members to develop their own creative interests.

Who May be Nominated:

Eligible nominees must meet the following requirements:

- Be a current resident of or work in the City of Santa Barbara and its environs, (defined as being within the First, Second or Third Supervisorial District), with at least five concurrent years of residency or employment.
- Be available to travel throughout the greater Santa Barbara community
- Be a recognized poet who meets the review criteria listed below

Review Criteria:

- A proven history of substantial publication of individual poems and/or books, including at least one work that is not self-published or by a vanity press
- An established history of activity in the Santa Barbara literary community, i.e., readings, publications, public presentations, and/or teaching
- Critical acclaim as demonstrated by special honors, awards, or other recognition

Who May Nominate:

Santa Barbara Poet Laureate nominations may come from any organization or individual. **Self-nominations will not be accepted.**

The Poet Laureate Review Committee:

The Poet Laureate shall be appointed by the Mayor of the City of Santa Barbara based upon the recommendation of the Review Committee. This Review Committee shall consist of members of the City of Santa Barbara's Arts Advisory. They will make the selection based upon the criteria as set forth above. Additionally, there shall be advisory members of the Review Committee, who shall include the City Council member serving as liaison to the Arts Advisory Committee, a representative from the *Santa Barbara Public Library* as well as one representative chosen from the Santa Barbara literary community.

Nomination Deadline: Friday, March 3, 2017:

Nominations must be sent to the **Santa Barbara Poet Laureate Review Committee** at the following mailing address. Material submitted will not be returned.

All material must be clearly addressed to the **Santa Barbara Poet Laureate Review Committee.**

Mailing Address:

Santa Barbara County Office of Arts & Culture
P.O. Box 2369
Santa Barbara, California 93120

For further information on the Santa Barbara Poet Laureate position, please contact:

Santa Barbara County Office of Arts & Culture
Phone: (805) 568-3990 or email: info@sbac.ca.gov

**SANTA BARBARA POET LAUREATE
Nomination Materials/Required Attachments**

All nominators must submit seven (7) copies of the following information:

1. A brief letter that provides:

- a. A summary of why the nominator considers the nominated poet's work to be of the highest quality and most representative of the Santa Barbara community
- b. The background or qualifications of the nominator or the nominating organization
- c. Contact information for the nominator and the nominated poet, including mailing address, phone numbers and e-mail address
- d. A statement verifying that the nominator has contacted the nominated poet and that the poet has reviewed the expectations of the position and agrees to the nomination.

2. The name and a short biography of the poet nominated

- a. A summary of the poet's significant awards and published works should be included
- b. The poet's resume (two-page maximum) may be attached

3. A sample of up to five (5) poems by the nominated poet, citing the source for each (including the title of the work from which it was taken, the publisher and the publication date).

Failure to provide all required materials results in automatic ineligibility.

Deadline for Nominations:

Friday, March 3 by 5 p.m.

Questions:

Contact the Office of Arts & Culture at 805.568.3990 for further information.

Rev. 1.19.17

March 15, 2017

Report & Recommendation of the 2017-18 Poet Laureate Review Sub-Committee

- The Poet Laureate program was established in 2005. This nomination is for the 7th City of Santa Barbara Poet Laureate.
- The review committee consisted of Elizabeth Owen and MaryLove Thralls (members of Arts Advisory), Sojourner Kincaid Rolle (our current Poet Laureate), Jace Turner (Community Relations Librarian from the SBPL), and Sarah York Rubin, ED of the SB County Office of Arts & Culture. Sarah facilitated the nomination and review process, but was not a voting member of the committee.
- This is a nomination for a two-year term and comes with a \$1000 stipend. The Poet Laureate is expected to participate in a minimum of four annual public functions a year, including for example, Summer Solstice, Old Spanish Days, and other significant festivals and events. Additionally, the PL shall aim to be actively involved with the local schools and shall endeavor to create or facilitate workshops and readings with students. To the extent possible, the PL should also endeavor to promote community awareness of the literary arts.

As we learned last month, this year the Office of Arts & Culture begins a partnership with the SB Public Library to further expand the literary outreach of the PL. The library is providing a space to serve as the official office of the PL.

- We received 5 nominations. A poet may not nominate him or herself – the nomination must come from the community, and the nominee must submit a statement verifying that s/he has reviewed the expectations of the position and agrees to the nomination.
- All 5 nominees were very interesting and had something unique to offer. Their resumes, sample poems and the letters we received from the individuals who nominated them gave us very good insight into each one's personality in addition to their literary craft.
- It was an interesting, eclectic group, as you might imagine. All are published poets, some more widely than others. Each appears to be well tethered in our community and would no doubt be supportive of their colleagues. Some are quite far along in years. Some have received more national and international acclaim than others.
- **One nominee in particular stood out to us. Enid Osborn writes wonderfully vivid, emotional poems that evoke a unique sense of place. Her poems are accessible and inclusive, appealing to a wide audience.**
Enid is well known in the local poetry community for hosting and organizing poetry events. By all accounts she has a particularly graceful presence, is a gifted public speaker and interpreter of poems. Her readings are inspiring and she is adept at networking, organizing events and bringing people together.

A native of New Mexico, Enid has lived in SB since 1982 and has been an active member of the poetry community since the early 1990's. She is fluent in Spanish and her educational background includes an emphasis on Latin American Literature. Her poetry, rooted in the natural world and attuned to Native American history and legend, is an excellent fit for a Santa Barbara Poet Laureate.

- It is worth noting that we received very enthusiastic letters of nomination for Enid from 15 members of the community, including past PL's, and numerous members of the academic and literary community. The educators that nominated her made a particular point of referencing her popularity with their students.
- Here are a few of quotes from some of these letters of support:

"Enid has an uncanny way of quietly charming any audience she is asked to stand in front of."

"Her subject matter matters. You listen hard, not wanting to miss a word. She is not afraid to go places other poets might not venture, and she does so with utter taste and compassion."

"Her vision includes a strong commitment to bringing poetry to everyone, drawing people in who are new to poetry as well as folks who are already part of the poetry community"

"Enid will be the people's poet. She has a gift for elevating everyday experience to the sublime. "

- The breadth of nominations for Enid did give our committee some pause. While it is clear that a large part of the poetry community stands behind her nomination, we wanted to look beyond this in our evaluation and not simply rubber stamp someone simply because they appear to have much wider support than the others. We had what I feel was a very thoughtful discussion about this, and spent time assessing each nominee's qualifications and literary style in our endeavor to find the right fit.
- **A Poet Laureate is in a unique position to express what it is like to be in a community, to really capture the essence of a place, and what binds us together in that place.**

Each of our past PL's has found ways to move the program forward and engage the people of SB. Our committee came to the conclusion that Enid Osborn has the vision and creativity to continue this tradition of deepening public access and appreciation of the literary arts in SB.

We wholeheartedly recommend Enid Osborn to be the City of SB's 7th PL for 2017-19.

- If you accept our committee's recommendation, the nomination will go to the city council for approval, with an installation ceremony to take place on April 11, coinciding with National Poetry Month.

Submitted by Elizabeth Owen, Member, Arts Advisory Committee, 3/16/17

Unanimously approved for Recommendation by the City Arts Advisory Committee on 3/16/17



PROCLAMATION

NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

and the

APPOINTMENT OF POET LAUREATE

ENID OSBORNE

APRIL 2017

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Barbara is widely recognized as an arts center, providing a spiritual home for creative activity, and for writers; and

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Barbara recognizes the value of the Office of Arts and Culture's participation in the Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Competition through a partnership with the California Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts & National Poetry Foundation; this program helps local high school students master public speaking, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage; and

WHEREAS, since 1996 the Academy of American Poets has designated April as National Poetry Month to highlight the extraordinary achievements and ongoing legacy of American Poets and increase visibility, presence, and accessibility of poetry in our communities and culture; and

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Barbara, recognizing of the value of poetry, established a Poet Laureate position in 2005 to honor local literary excellence and the spoken word by utilizing poetry to celebrate and elevate community events; and

*WHEREAS, the City of Santa Barbara hereby appoints **Enid Osborne** as the 2017-2019 Poet Laureate to steward appreciation of poetry and the written word in the community through events and programs at the Santa Barbara Public Library and elsewhere throughout April and the ensuing two-year appointment;*

NOW, THEREFORE, I, HELENE SCHNEIDER, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Santa Barbara, do hereby proclaim April 2017 as National Poetry Month, and congratulate Santa Barbara's newest Poet Laureate, Enid Osborne.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Official Seal of the City of Santa Barbara, California to be affixed this 11th day of April 2017.


MAYOR HELENE SCHNEIDER

