



## LETTER of RECOGNITION

**Paul J. Willis**  
**Poet Laureate for the City of Santa Barbara**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Santa Barbara is widely recognized as an arts center, providing a spiritual home for creative activity, and for writers in particular; 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**, in 2005, the City of Santa Barbara recognizing of the value of poetry established a Poet Laureate position and commissioned the City Arts Advisory Committee to nominate the Poet Laureate in order to direct proper attention and honor to the spoken word by utilizing poetry to celebrate and elevate community events; and

**WHEREAS**, the committee unanimously selected Paul J. Willis, who has inspired generations of students as a Professor of English at Westmont College since 1988 and has his poetry published in five collections. Over 400 of his poems have been published in more than 100 literary journals, and 45 poems included in 25 anthologies and several read by Garrison Keillor on the Writer's Almanac on National Public Radio; and

**WHEREAS**, Professor Willis has inspired audiences throughout the community, has been an invited poet in 100 venues throughout the United States, and has served as a judge for local and national poetry contests; and

**NOW; THEREFORE, I, HELENE SCHNEIDER**, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Santa Barbara, California, do hereby bestow upon **Paul J. Willis**, the honor of serving as the City's Poet Laureate for a two-year term commencing April 1, 2011.

**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 12th day of April 2011.

**HELENE SCHNEIDER**

Mayor

