

Poet Laureate Program For The Town of Highland, Indiana

The mission of the Town of Highland's Poet Laureate Program is to communicate the value of poetry to our community. The Poet Laureate of the Town of Highland will serve as an ambassador of the community's vibrant artistic and literary life, promoting the literary community, and celebrating the written word. An increasing number of Poet Laureate programs have been successfully implemented in communities across the U.S., and since the ancient Greeks, poet laureates have been appointed by governments large and small. The Town of Highland's Main Street Committee is currently seeking nominations for the 2017 year scheduled to begin in April in honor of National Poetry Month.

Objectives of the Poet Laureate Program

- Enhance the literary arts presence in the Highland area
- Encourage the reading and writing of literature and poetry
- Contribute to the continued growth of the individual Poet Laureate
- Raise awareness of the power of poetry and the spoken word
- Provide a forum for cross pollination of art forms
- Promote poetry as a form of literature that has deep roots among people of all ages and cultures

Eligibility

To be considered, a nominee must be a poet and either a current or former resident of Highland, and available and willing to collaborate with other town poets and artists to develop and present poetry-related activities that address the objectives of the Poet Laureate program. He or she must produce and share poetry written in English. The Poet Laureate must be capable of and willing to fulfill duties, including public appearances, according to expectations developed in this document.

Description of Position

This is an honorary position awarded to a person who has established a presence in the world of poetry, demonstrated commitment to and passion for poetry, and embraces the opportunity to engage the community with poetry. This is not a political appointment, nor is it a paid position.

The duties of the Poet Laureate of Town Highland area are:

A. Ceremonial

As a public voice of our community, the Poet Laureate will appear at public events suggested by the Town of Highland's Main Street Committee, by the Town of Highland Town Council, by community groups as requested, or at appropriate public venues favored by the Poet Laureate. It is preferable that poems presented at these events are original and tailored to the occasion, but if this is not possible, appropriate past work is acceptable. The Poet Laureate will meet and plan with the Poet Selection Panel to decide on a schedule of events that the Poet Laureate will attend and perform.

Tentative 2017-18 Schedule of Town Events

- Memorial Day service
- Flag Day ceremony on June 14th
- Memorial Day service
- 4th of July
- Festival of the Trail (October 15th in 2016)
- Veterans Day ceremony
- Town Council meeting before Thanksgiving (November 14th in 2016)
- First Town Council meeting of 2018

B. Educational

The poet will propose at least one special project during the term that involves an educational outreach initiative for the community and nourishes the poet's own personal growth and interests. Ideas for this project might include, but are not limited to:

- Curate a series of poetry readings with a unique focus
- Give public readings in unique venues
- Give and/or coordinate workshops in the various communities of the area
- Work with existing groups to further the public's appreciation for and interaction with poetry and the written word.
- Work with schools and libraries to develop poetry projects

The Poet Laureate should determine that the project does not conflict with existing programs or readings in the region.

C. Social Media

The poet will maintain and update all social media platforms, including information on the Town of Highland website on a regular basis, as well as create new ways to communicate and engage the greater community about the Poet Laureate program, forms of poetry, events, and programs in the Northwest Indiana region.

Terms of Service

The Poet Laureate will serve a one year term. If the Poet Laureate is unable to fulfill his/her term due to extended illness, relocation or inability to perform, the Poet Selection

Panel may, at its discretion, review previous applications and select a new Poet Laureate to complete the term. The Interim Poet Laureate is eligible to apply for the next complete term. The Poet Laureate may apply for a second term, but shall serve for no more than two consecutive terms.

Application Process

Nomination Packet Requirements

A. The poet should be self-nominated or nominated by a community member.

The packet must include:

- A one page statement describing the poet's qualifications for the role, including publications, any teaching experience, and literary arts community involvement; an outline of any plans for the role and how the poet will make a difference in the community.
- Three to five poems by the poet. The poet should be prepared to provide English translations if the submissions are composed in another language.
- Poet's full name, address, email address, and phone number on a cover page. **Please DO NOT include any identifying information (name) in your statement or in the poem pages submitted. All judging will be through a blind submission process.**

Submissions should either be mailed to Highland Main Street, Highland Town Hall, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland 46322, or sent by Email to lryskamp@highland.in.gov.

ALL NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY March 15, 2017.

Selection Process

A. Description of Poet Selection Panel

The panel will consist of between five and seven community members with the following qualifications:

- Interest and experience in the literary arts
- Diversity of age, ethnicity, etc.

B. Process

- a. The Poet Selection Panel will judge all work submitted through a blind consideration of the poetry and the nomination letter. Points to be considered may include:
 - Quality of poetry

- Engagement in past projects that involve poetry, prose, and
 - Other experiences related to the tradition of poetry
- b. The Panel may conduct face-to-face interviews with finalists and to help determine who will be nominated as the Poet Laureate. Points to be considered may include:
- Language and oral facility
 - Suitability for public performance and interaction
 - Philosophy and ideas for engaging the community

Selection Process Calendar, 2017

March 15: Applications due

March 15-29: Review and Selection Committee meeting to choose Poet Laureate

April 1: Poet Laureate notified of selection

Please note these dates are subject to change.