

RICHMOND ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION
POLICY MANUAL

POET LAUREATE
CITY OF RICHMOND

PURPOSE: To appoint a Richmond poet laureate who will provide a focus for the appreciation and dissemination of poetry in Richmond, promote the appreciation and knowledge of poetry among our youth, and act as a spokesperson for the growing number of poets and writers in Richmond.

POET LAUREATE COMMITTEE: The Arts & Culture Commission will appoint a poet laureate committee consisting of the following representatives: a member of the Arts & Culture Commission, a representative of the Public Art Advisory Committee, a representative of the Friends of the Richmond Public Library, an educator, and a member-at-large from the community. Appointments shall be made on an as-needed basis. The committee shall elect a chair and a vice-chair. The committee shall be responsible for selecting a poet laureate for a two-year term and for reporting annually to the Arts & Culture Commission on the progress of the Poet Laureate Program.

SELECTION CRITERIA: The Committee shall establish specific criteria for the appointment of the Poet Laureate based on his/her publications, public speaking ability, and writing skills. Finalists shall read before the panel and shall be interviewed by the full committee or representatives thereof designated by the Arts & Culture Commission.

All applicants shall submit a complete résumé including the following:

- 1) Evidence of a large body of work, whether published, self-published or unpublished;
- 2) Evidence of a history of advocacy for poetry;
- 3) Selections from their works, not to exceed ten pages;
- 4) Two personal or professional references;
- 5) Proof of current residency in Richmond;
- 6) A statement of availability for the two-year term.

DUTIES AND REQUIREMENTS: The Richmond Poet Laureate shall be appointed for a term of two years, beginning April 1 and ending April 30 two years later (a one-month overlap during National Poetry Month). The Poet Laureate Committee shall open applications for the position of Richmond Poet Laureate following the retirement of the current Poet Laureate.

An annual \$1,000 stipend is offered for the position.

The Richmond Poet Laureate will be required to participate in various events and activities, including but not limited to the following:

- 1) Visit schools and attend city, library and school functions as needed;
- 2) Write a poem about Richmond that will be placed in a notebook to be available at the library;
- 3) Write a summation of his/her impressions and experiences as Poet Laureate six months prior to the end of the two-year term, with the purpose of providing information that will

- help to improve, adjust or adapt the parameters of the post and/or the application process;
- 4) Give a reading at a special event at the beginning of the two-year term;
 - 5) If deemed appropriate by the committee, and if funding is available, the Poet Laureate may be asked to edit a chapbook consisting of his/her work or of the collected work of Richmond poets;
 - 6) Write a poem for, and/or participate in, National Poetry Month (April);
 - 7) Serve as a judge for the annual *Richmond Writes!* student poetry writing contest;
 - 8) Write a poem for, and/or participate in, National Arts and Humanities Month (October).

If the Poet Laureate is not able to complete a full term, the Poet Laureate Committee shall accept applications for a replacement. The replacement Poet Laureate will complete the remaining portion of the two-year term, and, if approved by the Poet Laureate Committee, may serve another term.

An appointed poet laureate who does not fulfill the terms of his or her appointment may be removed by a majority vote of the Poet Laureate Committee.

A Poet Laureate may serve two consecutive terms if approved by the Committee. After a hiatus of at least two terms, a past Poet Laureate may be reappointed by the Committee.

INDEMNIFICATION: As a condition of submitting an application for the position of Richmond Poet Laureate, the

applicant shall agree that he/she will not pursue any legal remedy against the Richmond Arts & Culture Commission and the City of Richmond, its officials, employees or agents thereof, other than the administrative appeal of the decision of the Poet Laureate Committee to the Board of Trustees, as a result of the application being rejected.

Before assuming the office of Richmond Poet Laureate, the successful applicant must sign an agreement whereby the applicant agrees to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the City of Richmond, its officials, employees and agents and the Richmond Arts & Culture Commission from any claims, judgments, damages or liability whatsoever, arising out of the fulfillment of the duties of Richmond Poet Laureate. This agreement to indemnify, defend and hold harmless is intended to be comprehensive and shall include, but not be limited to, claims relating to personal injury, wrongful death, property damage, copyright infringement, defamation and invasion of privacy.

TERM: The appointment of the Poet Laureate for 2017-19 shall begin on April 1, 2017 and end on April 30, 2020. The program was adopted by City Council in April of 2012, and since that time the appointed Poets Laureate have been: Dwayne Parish, Donte Clark, Lincoln Bergman, and Brenda Quintanilla.