



Proposal to establish the position of Poet Laureate for the City of Brentwood

What is a Poet Laureate?

- A Poet Laureate is an individual designated to be a public advocate for the appreciation and advancement of literary arts, in particular, poetry. Great Britain has had a Poet Laureate for centuries and in 1985 the U.S. Congress established the position. Many states have had a Poet Laureate for years. California established a position in the 1850s. The City of Brentwood established the position in 2002.

What does a Poet Laureate do?

- The Poet Laureate is responsible for increasing the public's awareness of the benefits of poetry, as well as commemorating certain civic events through composing and reading poetry at inaugurations, dedications, etc.

Why does Brentwood need a Poet Laureate?

- First, the City of Brentwood does not "need" a Poet Laureate. But in the same way that public art and music can enhance the quality of life within a community, the enjoyment of poetry and related literary arts can do the same.

Part of the "Powers and Duties" of the Brentwood Arts Commission is to promote programs for cultural enrichment of the city in diverse art disciplines. Designation of a Poet Laureate would provide a means for Brentwood to confirm publicly the value of literary arts. As an enlightened and educated community, Brentwood "should" have a Poet Laureate.

What would be the specific duties of Brentwood's Poet Laureate?

- The Poet Laureate will serve as a public advocate for the appreciation and advancement of the arts, particularly poetry.
- Provide a minimum of six readings as approved by the Brentwood Arts Commission during their appointment. These readings should be presented in a variety of geographical locations, thus providing equal access to the community.
- Serve as a liaison between the Arts Commission and local schools, library, and literary organizations and may conduct readings and workshops devoted to poetic works on a as- needed basis.
- Create a project, through the Arts Commission, to bring poetic art to those residents who might not otherwise have this exposure.

- ❑ Serve as a scout for suitable poets who could appear at cultural performances sponsored by the Arts Commission.

Proposed Minimum Qualifications:

- ❑ Reside in the City limits of Brentwood.
- ❑ Submit a resume and some original works.
- ❑ Be willing to serve a two-year term with no compensation and be willing to be dismissed for any reason as determined by the Brentwood City Council.
- ❑ Be willing to assist in the process of choosing and orienting the Poet Laureate elect mid-way through their term.