



**Office of the Mayor  
City of Los Angeles**

**ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA**

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**MAYOR VILLARAIGOSA ANNOUNCES CREATION OF CITY'S FIRST POET  
LAUREATE PROGRAM**

***Nomination Guidelines and Deadlines Announced for All Interested Angeleno Poets***

**LOS ANGELES** – Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa today announced the creation of the City of Los Angeles' first Poet Laureate Program in collaboration with the Los Angeles City Council, the Mayor's Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP), and the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA).

The City of Los Angeles Poet Laureate will serve as the official ambassador of Los Angeles' vibrant poetry and literary culture. The Poet Laureate will use the position as a platform to promote the City's greatest writers and the transformative qualities of poetry and the written word throughout all parts of the community.

"In a city that prides itself on its creativity and dedication to a vital and thriving arts community, Los Angeles is pleased to add this new program to our portfolio of arts initiatives citywide," Mayor Villaraigosa said. "We invite all interested Angelenos to nominate noteworthy poets and encourage self-nominations as we search for the first City of Los Angeles Poet Laureate."

Councilman Richard Alarcón, Chair of the City's Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee, added, "We all have tremendous pride in the cultural and creative history of Los Angeles and a Poet Laureate would help eloquently share the best of our City with the rest of the world. I am very pleased to join Mayor Villaraigosa in announcing the Poet Laureate program in Los Angeles."

"We have a U.S. Poet Laureate. We have a State Poet Laureate. The City of Los Angeles, with its rich and culturally diverse literary history, is long overdue for its own Poet Laureate," said Councilmember Ed P. Reyes, a U.C.L.A. literature major who recently honored California Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera. "I applaud Mayor Villaraigosa for creating L.A.'s first Poet Laureate Program."

Nominations will be accepted until 5 p.m. October 10. The Poet Laureate Announcement will be made in October.

Los Angeles' Poet Laureate will serve for a term of two years. The first Poet Laureate honored with this distinction will serve from November 2012 to October 2014 and receive a \$10,000 annual grant from DCA.

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Over the course of the appointment, the City of Los Angeles Poet Laureate will provide at least four public readings and four school visits annually. The readings will consist of either original works created for the events, past work appropriate to the occasion and to the audience, or historic works by past Los Angeles poets in locations across the city.

The appointed Laureate will educate Los Angeles residents, visitors, civic and elected leaders, young people, adults, seniors, and students of all ages about the value of poetry and creative expression through self-coordinated or community-partnered events and activities that are reviewed and approved by DCA, and write one or more commemorative poem(s) about Los Angeles.

Candidates must be poets who demonstrate excellence in their artistic work and have received wide recognition in the professional community and have significant ties to the Los Angeles community.

The selection process will be overseen by a Poet Laureate Task Force, appointed by Mayor Villaraigosa, consisting of a group of five to seven diverse poets and literary experts. The Task Force reviews nominations and makes recommendations for DCA to forward to the Mayor's Office for consideration. The current Task Force consists of:

**Dana Gioia**, Chair of the Task Force, a distinguished poet, the Judge Widney Professor of Poetry and Public Culture at USC, and former Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts;

**Amy Uyematsu**, an award winning poet, whose poems consider the intersection of politics, mathematics, spirituality, and the natural world;

**Carolyn See**, a Los Angeles-based author of nine books, winner of a number of literary awards and a recipient of both the Guggenheim Fellowship and the Getty Center Fellowship;

**Douglas Kearney**, whose manuscript, *The Black Automaton*, was chosen by Catherine Wagner for the National Poetry Series and published by Fence Books in 2009 and was a finalist for the Pen Center USA Award in 2010;

**Kate Gale**, the author of several poetry collections, founder and managing editor of Red Hen Press and editor of the *Los Angeles Review*;

**Lester Lennon**, poet and author of *The Upward Curve of Earth and Heavens*, found in more than 70 public and university libraries including the Los Angeles Public Library, Yale and Oxford.

And **William Archila**, an English teacher who earned his MFA in poetry from the University of Oregon, and whose poems have appeared in Agni, Blue Mesa Review, Crab Orchard Review, The Georgia Review, The Los Angeles Review, Notre Dame Review, Poetry International and Puerto del Sol, among others.

"It is wonderful to announce the new Poet Laureate position," Poet Laureate Task Force Chair Dana Gioia said. "Los Angeles is the creative capital of the 21st century. Honoring poets and writers with this new public office is a fitting symbol for the power of the language and the imagination in our remarkable community."

To review City of Los Angeles Poet Laureate Guidelines and Application/Nomination Instructions, please go to the DCA website at [www.culturela.org](http://www.culturela.org).

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