



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
Inter-Departmental Correspondence  
Board of Supervisors



**Date:** March 13, 2013

**Board Meeting Date:** April 23, 2013

**Special Notice / Hearing:** None

**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**From:** Supervisors Warren Slocum and Carole Groom

**Subject:** Establish a San Mateo County Poet Laureate

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt Resolution establishing the honorary post of San Mateo County Poet Laureate.

**BACKGROUND:**

The tradition of naming a Poet Laureate began in 17<sup>th</sup> century England when John Dryden was first named to the post. The United State Library of Congress appointed an official Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress in 1937. In 1985, an Act of Congress changed the name of the position to Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress.

California was the first state to name a Poet Laureate informally and the position was established by the Legislature in 2001. A number of California counties and cities have followed suit and established the position of Poet Laureate, including the Bay Area counties of San Francisco, Marin, Napa, Sonoma, Alameda and Santa Clara.

The description of duties, compensation and administration of the Poet Laureate vary in the various jurisdictions; the poets laureate serve either a one or two year term. There are no statutory requirements for establishing the post of Poet Laureate for counties. Most counties receive a nomination of one to three Poet Laureate candidates from a selection committee comprised of members of local arts councils, universities, poets and librarians. The Board of Supervisors will appoint the poet by resolution. The title of Poet Laureate is honorary.

**DISCUSSION:**

The establishment of the honorary post of Poet Laureate in San Mateo County will elevate poetry into the consciousness of San Mateo County residents and will help

highlight and celebrate the literary arts within our County. A government that celebrates and honors the arts as a way to share civic and community stories is one that values citizen interaction and participation. The arts and specifically poetry inspires creativity in adults and children to express feelings, experiences and current events.

The Poet Laureate will be an honorary two-year position. During that term, the Poet Laureate will act as an advocate for poetry, literature and the arts; and contribute to San Mateo County's poetry and literary legacy through public readings and participation in civic events. The Poet Laureate also will propose and lead community projects during his or her tenure.

The Poet Laureate will not be considered an employee of San Mateo County and will continue to have individual pursuits. Any compensation for the post would be in the form of stipends or grants to cover the costs associated with the services provided.

An ad hoc Poet Laureate Advisory Committee be composed of two members of the Board shall be established for the purpose of selecting a nominee for consideration of appointment by the Board of Supervisors. The committee may solicit input from members of local arts councils, universities, poets and librarians.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the proposed resolution as to form.