



Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling Photo Credit: *File*

Norwalk Heralds Introduction Of Inaugural Poet Laureate Program

by Frank Mojica 10/30/2015 lifestyle

NORWALK, Conn. -- Mayor Harry W. Rilling announced the launch of Norwalk's inaugural Poet Laureate program at the main library on Oct. 27.

"The mission of Norwalk's Poet Laureate Program is to communicate the value of poetry to our community," said Rilling. "The Poet Laureate will serve as an ambassador of the community's vibrant artistic and literary life, promoting the literary community and celebrating the written word."

Rilling got the idea from South Windsor's first selectman, then took it to the Norwalk Arts Commission. Under suggestion from Chairman Susan Wallerstein, the library took the lead.

"Every April we celebrate National Poetry month with readings of favorite poems by city officials; it is always a popular and inspiring evening", said Norwalk's Library Director Christine Bradley.

The program aims to promote poetry as a form of communication with value in everyday life for Norwalk residents. Another program objective is to inspire critical thinkers and writers among the emerging generation, as well as encourage the writing and reading of poetry and literature.

An honorary position, the Norwalk Poet Laureate carries no pay. Eligible nominees must be a resident of Norwalk, a poet and available and willing to collaborate with other poets and develop and present activities related to poetry.

Nominees must submit a completed application form by Jan. 1. The Poet Laureate will be introduced by the the mayor on or after April 1.

The announcement came on the birthday of poet Dylan Thomas.

As the state's representative poet, the Poet Laureate serves as an advocate for poetry and promotes the appreciation of poetry and literary arts activities among Connecticut citizens.

Connecticut's 2015 poet laureate, Rennie McQuilkin, formerly Simsbury's Poet Laureate, says he wants to make poetry an integral part of the state's culture, and he plans to advocate for even more towns to adopt the post.

More Connecticut cities and towns are beginning to have their own Poet Laureates. Lisa Schwartz was introduced as Newtown's first Poet Laureate on Sept. 19. She joins seven other town Poet Laureates in Connecticut.