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Governor Appoints Paulann Petersen as Oregon’s Sixth Poet Laureate

April, 26, 2010 – Salem, ORE. Governor Ted Kulongoski has named Paulann Petersen of Portland to a two-year appointment as poet laureate of Oregon. Petersen will be Oregon’s sixth poet laureate since 1921 when Edwin Markham first took the post. She succeeds Lawson Fusao Inada of Medford, who held the post since 2006.

“Paulann Petersen is the perfect choice to serve as Oregon’s poet laureate,” said Governor Kulongoski. “Her wonderful poetry and her commitment to sharing her craft with the people of Oregon through her teaching and service exemplify the kind person that is ideal to serve in this position.”

Paulann Petersen was born and raised in Oregon and spent half of her adult life in Klamath Falls. She is a widely published poet, with four collections – The Wild Awake (2002), Blood-Silk (2004), A Bride of Narrow Escape (2006) and Kindle (2008) – and several chapbooks to her credit. Petersen has received several awards, including Stanford University’s Wallace Stegner Fellowship in Poetry, two Carolyn Kizer Poetry Awards, and Literary Art’s Stewart Holbrook Award for Outstanding Contributions to Oregon’s Literary Life.

Petersen is a committed teacher who has taught high school English and led dozens of workshops schools libraries, colleges, and writer’s conferences across Oregon. Petersen is an active board member of the Friends of William Stafford, Oregon’s fourth poet laureate, and organizes the William Stafford Birthday Celebration each January. That celebration has now expanded to 58 events, 40 of them in Oregon.

In February, the Oregon Cultural Trust and partners solicited nominations in a public process. A committee of writers, poets and cultural leaders considered 17 nominations submitted from around the state for the post. The poet laureate position is a collaborative project of the state’s five statewide cultural partners, Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon
Heritage Commission, Oregon Historical Society, Oregon Humanities and State Historic Preservation Office, with funding from the Oregon Cultural Trust. The position is funded with a stipend of $10,000 per year for the poet laureate’s work, with an additional $10,000 for expense reimbursement.

**Oregon’s poets laureate**
- Edwin Charles Markham (1921-1940)
- Ben Hur Lampman (1951-1954)
- Ethel Romig Fuller (1957-1965)
- Lawson Fusao Inada (2006-2010)
- Paulann Petersen (2010-)

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