



News Release

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Arts Commission announces Shari Wagner as new Indiana State Poet Laureate

(Indianapolis, Indiana) – The Indiana Arts Commission (IAC) announced today the selection of Shari Wagner, Westfield, Indiana, as the new Indiana State Poet Laureate.

Wagner teaches poetry and memoir writing at the Indiana Writers Center and literature for Butler University's Religion, Spirituality and the Arts seminar. She holds an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from Indiana University – Bloomington and is the author of two poetry books, *The Harmonist at Nightfall: Poems of Indiana* and *Evening Chore*. Her poems have been featured in Ted Kooser's syndicated column, *American Life in Poetry* and in Garrison Keillor's radio program, *The Writer's Almanac*.

Born in Goshen, Indiana, Wagner grew up in rural Wells County, near the town of Markle, Indiana. She is married and has two grown children. She has taken part in international cross-cultural experiences in Somalia, Kenya, Haiti, and Honduras as well as domestic cross-cultural experiences working and living with the Clifton-Choctaw of Louisiana. Her special interest is in Native American history and Indiana history and folklore.

"I am delighted and honored to represent poetry in a state that has shaped my artistic vision in so many ways and given me such a wealth of subjects to explore," Wagner said. In the next two years, I look forward to traveling its length and breadth as I promote Indiana poets and foster the writing and reading of poems in a variety of settings – schools, parks, libraries, senior and veteran centers, and historic sites. It's exciting that Indiana's bicentennial and the centennial of its state parks will occur during my term, significant anniversaries I plan to celebrate by emphasizing poetry's connection to history and nature."

Wagner will begin her two-year term as Indiana Poet Laureate January 1, 2016 and will continue serving through December 31, 2017.

(more)

Indiana Arts Commission

100 N. Senate Ave., Rm. N505

Indianapolis, IN 46204

The Indiana Arts Commission conducted a statewide call for nominations which were reviewed by a selection committee comprised of representatives from Indiana's major institutions of higher education.

"Indiana is fortunate to have an abundance of creative talent promoting the art of poetry and its ability to enrich the lives of all ages," said Sarah Fronczek, IAC Community Development Manager and Poet Laureate Program Director. "Shari Wagner possesses a special gift and ability to communicate her knowledge and love of nature and humanity through written and spoken verse. She will carry forward the fine work of all of Indiana's previous gifted and dedicated laureates."

Wagner succeeds George Kalamaras, becoming the sixth State Poet Laureate since the program was created.

Increasing awareness of poetry and the power of the written and spoken word was the inspiration behind legislation signed into law in 2005 creating the State Poet Laureate Program. The legislation provides for the development of special educational programming coordinated between the Indiana Arts Commission, the Indiana Department of Education, and the State Poet Laureate.

To learn more about the Poet Laureate program, please visit: www.in.gov/arts/2393.htm.

The Indiana Arts Commission is dedicated to the vision of the arts everywhere, everyday, for everyone in Indiana.

(Editor note: photo by Tamara Dubin Brown)

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