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City of San Diego Names Ron Salisbury Inaugural Poet Laureate

LOCAL POET CHARGED WITH ELEVATING SAN DIEGO'S LITERARY ARTS SCENE

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego today announced the appointment of Ron Salisbury as San Diego's first Poet Laureate.

"San Diegans have a special story to tell and I can think of no one better than long-time resident Ron Salisbury to tell it," said Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer. "With the creation of this new City tradition, I encourage all San Diegans to explore the creativity and culture of our great city and I look forward to seeing our community's love for the literary arts continue to grow."

The City's Poet Laureate serves as an ambassador and advocate for poetry, spoken word and the literary arts. During the two-year term, the appointed Poet Laureate produces engaging and conceptually rich original works inspired by and in response to San Diego. Charged with cultivating critical thinking, connection, and appreciation of the art form, the Poet Laureate participates in public events and leads a poetry project that broadens the audiences for poetry. Most importantly, the Poet Laureate is the City's poet, a civic poet - the people's poet, whose role is to elevate an already thriving literary arts scene and enhance San Diego's cultural richness.

Salisbury's many literary awards include the Main Street Rag's Poetry Book Prize for his book *Miss Desert Inn* (2015). A life-long learner, he earned his first degree, a Bachelor of Arts in Business and Poetry from Antioch University in San Francisco in 1983, followed by two Master of Art's degrees, one in Management from Antioch and the second in Liberal Studies from Mills College in Oakland, Calif. Thirty years later, at the age of 69, he decided to return to school and pursue his true passion and received a Masters of Fine Arts in Poetry from San Diego State University. Salisbury lives in San Diego's University City neighborhood.

As a dedicated teacher, Salisbury has taught poetry classes in San Diego and throughout California for more than 40 years. For the past eight years he has led a weekly poetry workshop at Writer's Ink, a local nonprofit.

“Since the 7th grade, all I’ve ever wanted to be is a poet,” Salisbury said. “It is a great honor to be chosen as San Diego’s first Poet Laureate. This appointment will empower me to represent the dynamic San Diego I love and promote. It will allow me to teach and encourage poetry to an even higher presence than I already do. I want to give back to the city that adopted me, share my poetry with its people and share San Diego with the world.”

Salisbury was chosen through a competitive request for qualifications process for the role as Poet Laureate. The criteria used to evaluate artists included artistic excellence, education and training as a literary artist, literary recognition, engagement in past projects that involve poetry, and other experiences related to poetry, among others.

The Poet Laureate selection committee was composed of Adrian Arancibia, co-founder of poetry and spoken word collective Taco Shop Poets and Professor of English and Creative Writing at Miramar Community College; poet, curator and columnist Gerda Govine; Veronica Murphy, Artistic Director and co-founder of Write Out Loud; and Gaspar Orozco, poet and Mexican Consulate of Cultural Events in San Diego.

To learn more about the Poet Laureate Initiative and related programming please visit www.sandiego.gov/arts-culture.

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