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PRESS RELEASE

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Search Begins for Santa Barbara’s Next Poet Laureate *Local poets encouraged to apply for the creative civic position*

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – The Santa Barbara County Office of Arts and Culture, in partnership with the City of Santa Barbara and Santa Barbara Public Library, is now accepting applications for the next Santa Barbara Poet Laureate. The selected individual will receive an honorarium of \$2,000 to serve from 2025-2027 and support the City through active participation in ceremonial, educational, and cultural activities. Applications will be accepted until February 14, 2025 at sbac.ca.gov/poet-laureate.

The City of Santa Barbara established the Poet Laureate program in 2005 to expand the presence and accessibility of the literary arts to local communities. In 2016, the Santa Barbara Public Library became the official “home” of the Poet Laureate and a major programmatic collaborator. The Poet Laureate is considered an important community ambassador. “We’re proud of the program’s significant community impact,” said Santa Barbara Public Library Acting Director Brandon Beaudette.

Laureates are inducted during the City’s National Poetry Month in April and serve for a two-year term. Applicants must be published authors who live in Santa Barbara and have a history of local community engagement. Additional review criteria include prior honors and recognition, excellent public speaking skills, and a commitment to producing events that make poetry more available to local residents.

The current Santa Barbara Poet Laureate, Melinda Palacio, will conclude her term in March 2025. Palacio, an internationally-lauded poet, author, and speaker, is Santa Barbara’s first Chicana Poet Laureate. Her collection, “How Fire Is a Story, Waiting,” received First Prize in Poetry at the International Latino Book Awards.

Previous Poets Laureate include Emma Trelles, Laure-Anne Bosselaar, Enid Osborn, Sojourner Kincaid Rolle, Chrissy Yost, Paul Willis, David Starkey, Perie Longo and Barry Spacks.

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About the Santa Barbara County Office of Arts and Culture:

The Santa Barbara County Office of Arts and Culture is a division of the County's Community Services Department, serving as the local governmental umbrella for arts and culture projects and programs within Santa Barbara County. The Office represents a longstanding partnership between the County and City of Santa Barbara. For more information, go to www.sbac.ca.gov.