

TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF BILL SCR 4002 DESIGNATING DENISE
LAJIMODIERE AS POET LAUREATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

My name is Jamie Parsley. I am a poet, the author of 13 books of poems and a collection of short fiction. My first book was published in 1992. I currently serve as Poet-in-Residence at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. I am also an Episcopal priest, serving as Rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Fargo. I am a life-long and very proud resident of the state of North Dakota.

I have had the truly great honor of serving with Denise Lajimodiere since 2004 as an Associate Poet Laureate for the State of North Dakota. We were both chosen by Larry Woiwode to assist him in that position at that time. In addition to being fellow writers, poets and Associate Poets Laureate, I consider Denise a very dear and precious friend, and someone that I personally admire and hold very high esteem.

Denise Lajimodiere is a prolific and amazingly talented poet and writer. Her influence as a well-respected writer, teacher and activist, is far-reaching, extending far beyond the borders of North Dakota. Her poetry, especially in her collections Thunderbird and Dragonfly Dances, is a beautiful and poignant reflection not only of the sometimes complex and difficult aspects of life in North Dakota, but also of nature and life in general. Her non-fiction writing, especially her book Stringing Rosaries, has been a powerful example of strong and competent writing exposing a dark chapter in our collective history. It is a book that has loudly and defiantly given voice to generations of native people whose voices were silenced by prejudice, societal norms and repression.

I cannot think of another poet or writer in North Dakota at this time more deserving of the designation of Poet Laureate than Denise Lajimodiere. Her position as such will honor and represent all the various voices and faces of our great and diverse state.

Submitted by Jamie Parsley

Fargo, North Dakota

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