

From: Suzzanne Kelley, PhD
Regarding: SCR 4002 Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere / Poet Laureate of North Dakota

Greetings:

I write this morning in support of designating Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere as Poet Laureate of North Dakota. Although I am editor in chief for North Dakota State University Press, I do not represent NDSU in this matter.

I am long acquainted with the previous Poet Laureate, Larry Woiwode (may he rest in peace), and with the present proposed designee, and I am an admirer of their work. They share many qualifications for this position including stellar credentials and experience as teachers of their craft, presenters of their work, and proponents of the literary scene in North Dakota. They both have national—and in Lajimodiere's circumstance, international—recognition for their writing and presentation of prose and poetry as essential elements to understanding the place in which we live. In fact, other than Lajimodiere, no North Dakota poet is on equal footing with the stature set by Woiwode.

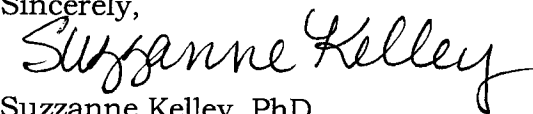
In addition to her insights when writing about the nature and people of this place, she brings a broad perspective to topics from her positions of being female and Native. And yet, neither of these perspectives take over the writing, which is accessible to all public audiences and abhors the esoteric, exclusive writing that sometimes claims modern poets. No matter the audience, Lajimodiere's poetry speaks to universal topics of parental and generational love, loss, youth, culture, and the responsibilities and joys of the elderly.

As a successor to Woiwode, Lajimodiere will carry on the tradition of being well spoken—no matter the audience size or composition—and able to meet the needs of her audience. I have seen her receive a standing ovation from a room of hundreds of historians, and I've seen her teach her craft to a group of six youth. In all cases, she is attentive to cues from the audience, patient, and nimble in her response to meet their needs. As Poet Laureate, she would exemplify the visible role of an advocate for poetry in our state.

Lajimodiere's numerous poetry publications—with multiple presses and journals—speak volumes about her dedication to the craft and to her reception among layman, peers, and professionals. She is a dedicated writer and proponent of writing as a skill, and she has received numerous awards in response to her work.

It is without reservation that I recommend Dr. Denise K. Lajimodiere as our next North Dakota Poet Laureate.

Sincerely,



Suzzanne Kelley, PhD
Editor in Chief, North Dakota State University Press
Past President, Midwest Independent Publishers Association
Editorial Board Member, *North Dakota Quarterly*